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PICTURES FROM ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY
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With Twenty Illustrations,

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R. MACBETH
WILLIAM SMALL
MARCUS STONE
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CONTENTS.

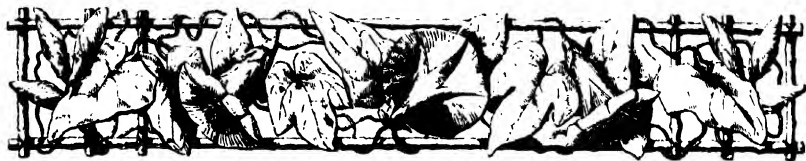
AUTHOR.	SUBJECT.	PAGE.
GEOFFREY CHAUCER	<i>Griseelda</i>	1
EDMUND SPENSER	<i>Una</i>	41
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE	<i>Falstaff</i>	21
JOHN MILTON	<i>The Lady in Comus</i>	31
JOSEPH ADDISON	<i>Sir Roger de Coverley</i>	40
HENRY FIELDING	<i>Sophia Western</i>	47
LAURENCE STERNE	<i>The Shandies</i>	53
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN	<i>The Rivals</i>	60
OLIVER GOLDSMITH	<i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i>	70
WILLIAM COWPER	<i>John Gilpin</i>	79
ROBERT BURNS	<i>Tim O'Shantos</i>	86
GEORGE COLMAN THE YOUNGER	<i>The Heir-at-Law</i>	91
WALTER SCOTT	<i>Jeune Deans</i>	98
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE	<i>The Ancient Mariner</i>	108
THOMAS CAMPBELL	<i>Gertrude of Wyoming</i>	115
LORD BYRON	<i>Haidée</i>	122
LORD LYTTON	<i>Nydia</i>	131
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY	<i>Colonel Newcome</i>	139
CHARLES DICKENS	<i>Pickswiff</i>	149
ALFRED TENNYSON ✓	<i>Dora</i>	159



ILLUSTRATIONS

SUBJECT.	ARTIST.	FACING PAGE
1. GRISELDA	MARCUS STONE	4
2. UNA	J. D. WATSON	14
3. FALSTAFF	WILLIAM F. YEAMES, A.R.A.	24
4. THE LADY IN COMUS	EDWARD HUGHES	36
5. SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY	R. MACBETH	44
6. SOPHIA WESTERN	GEORGE DU MAURIER	50
7. UNCLE TOBY	FRED BARNARD	58
8. LYDIA LANGUISH	E. M. WARD, R.A.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
9. THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD	JOHN GILBERT	70
10. JOHN GILPIN	WILLIAM SMALL	80
11. TAM O'SHANTER	EDWARD WAGNER	88
12. DICK DOWLAS	CHARLES GREEN	96
13. JEANIE DEANS	JOHN FAED	104
14. THE ANCIENT MARINER	W. CAVE THOMAS	112
15. GERTRUDE OF WYOMING	F. WILFRID LAWSON	120
16. HAIDÉE	S. L. FILDES	128
17. NYDIA	J. C. HORSLEY, R.A.	136
18. COLONEL NEWCOME	R. BARNES	146
19. PECKSNIFF	HABLOT K. BROWNE	156
20. DORA	MRS. E. M. WARD	160

The Ornamental Title and Headings designed by Thomas Sulman.



INTRODUCTION.



So one who wanders through a spacious gallery, where the pictures of a nation's artists are exhibited, pauses at times before some work that especially attracts his attention, and from the plenitude of riches that surrounds him seeks to note some few works as representatives of peculiar genius, of special style and of different schools of art: so in these pages it is our aim to select from the many masterpieces that enrich our English literature a few pictures which we believe may be fairly taken as representative works. It is scarcely necessary to say that our selection does not profess to give even one specimen of every distinct style or class of writing: to do this would require a space many times exceeding our limits. Nor do we assert that other specimens equally deserving of notice, even for our purpose, cannot be found. Sufficient for us if we present nothing inferior in merit or unworthy of study. Our design, too, is limited by the exclusion of all real characters, being confined to those which are entitled to be considered the creation of the author's intellect, and which possess an individuality sufficiently marked to justify our choosing them for special consideration.

We had also in view the hope of making ordinary readers familiar with some of those works of high art and unrivalled beauty which, by

reason of their antique form, or their associations, are less widely known than they deserve to be. The writings of Chaucer and of Spenser are mines of literary wealth, which will abundantly repay other labourers than the antiquarian and the philologist. The poetry of Chaucer especially, when the outer crust has been penetrated—the obsolete words and spelling mastered, and the pronunciation and rhythm understood—will be found, as Professor Craik truly asserts, “about the greenest and freshest in our language,” than which “we have none in which there is either a more abounding or a more bounding spirit of life, a truer or fuller natural inspiration.” Nor will the study of Spenser afford less delight. The greatest, as he was the last, minstrel of the chivalry which had then just passed away for ever, his spirit lingered “with fond, untiring admiration on the gorgeous scenery which covered the elfin land of knighthood and romance.” And he gave the world his dreams of “antique grandeur and ideal loveliness” woven into the delicate and beautiful “gossamer tissue of fantasy.”

It has been our endeavour, too, to present in each case an epitome of the tale or subject, at least so far as was needful for the illustration of the character selected, though we are painfully sensible of the extent to which the process must, of necessity, impair the perfection and weaken the effect of each work as a whole.

The Publishers have procured some of the most distinguished Artists of the day to illustrate with their pencils the pictures which the writer has endeavoured to present with the pen; and thus, it is hoped, their united efforts will give the public a book worthy of its favour.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.



GRISELDA.

IN the "Canterbury Tales," Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Father of English Poetry," gave, 500 years ago, to our literature its first great poem, which, though its language has become obsolete, and its idioms unfamiliar, still keeps its place by the charms of its poetry, the vividness of its pictures, and the truth of its sentiments.

The fiction by which he has bound together these tales is in this wise. Our poet tells us that, purporting to go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, he went to "The Tabard Inn, fast by the Bell," still to be seen as the Talbot Inn, in High Street, in the Borough of Southwark. And at night there came in, with like intent, some nine-and-twenty sundry folk—most of whom he describes, with a graphic power that makes them invaluable as permanent pictures of characters and classes that, for the most part, have passed away—the Knight, chivalrous, true, honourable, and courteous to women; the Squire his son, "a lover and a lusty bachelor;" the Prioress, simple and coy, with her pretty oath, "by Saint Loy;" the Monk at whose love of hunting and horses and carnal comforts Chaucer takes a sly fling; the Merchant, with his forked beard, and hat of Flanders beaver; the Clerk of Oxenford, much given to logic, with thread-

bare cloak, for he spent all his money on books; the Franklin, a man of hospitality and station, knight of the shire and sheriff; the Doctor of Phisic, grounded in astronomy and magic; the Wife of Bath, with a pound weight of kerchiefs on her head, and hosen of fine scarlet; the Parson, poor, but rich in holiness, a lovely portrait; the Ploughman, and Miller, and Reeve, and all the others, whom one may see grouped in the well-known picture of Stothard, or the fine engraving of it by the Schiavonettis. The Host, a large and seemly man, and right merry withal, made great cheer, and set them to supper; and when they had finished he said, "Ye be right heartily welcome, for truly saw I not this twelvemonth a goodlier company. Fain would I make you merry when ye ride forth to Canterbury, on the morrow. Now listen to me;" and then he propounded to them how each should tell a tale on the way; and on their return, he that told the best tale should have a supper at the cost of the rest. "And I myself will gladly ride with you, at mine own cost, and be your guide." This pleased them all, and on the morrow they set forth, and, after riding a little out of Southwark—"Let us see," said the Host, "who shall tell the first tale."

In his turn the Clerk was called on for his story, and tells that of Griselda, whose name has become proverbial for patience. This charming tale, he tell us, he learned from Petrarch, at Padua, whom it is likely enough Chaucer may have met, when he visited Italy in 1373. Petrarch's version, which Chaucer has mainly followed, entitled *De Obedientia et Fide Uxoris Mythologia*, is itself but a translation into the Latin of Dionco's tale, forming the tenth Novella of the tenth Giornata of the "Decameron" of Boccaccio. The researches, however, of Tyrwitt and of the Abbé de Sade prove that we must look for the original of the story to a time anterior to that of Boccaccio and Petrarch.

Though the character of Griselda is not the original creation of Chaucer, he has filled up the outline with such a wealth of detail, and worked into it such beauty of colouring and expression—meekness, gentleness, tenderness, and piety—resignation, fortitude, and long-suffering—that he may well claim Griselda as his own. Whoever compares the heroine of Chaucer with that of Boccaccio in the original, notwithstanding all the beauty of the Italian narrative, will at once understand this. Let us briefly present this charming character as Chaucer has delineated her, weaving into our narrative, as we proceed, some of the verses of our great English poet.

Walter, Marquis of Saluzzo, in Italy—a man of high lineage and great discretion, and beloved by his people—devotes himself to hawking and hunting, and cares not to marry and give them an heir. This they take much to heart, and at last they wait on him. “And one of them that wisest was of lore” makes known their wishes, that he would take a wife, enforcing his request with many sage observations on the shortness of life, and the certainty of death; proposing to choose for him a wife “born of the gentlest and of the best of all the land.”

“You would constrain me, mine own people dear,” replies the marquis, “to do what I never intended. I enjoy thoroughly my liberty; yet will I yield to your wishes, and take a wife; but you also must yield to me. I will choose for myself. Worth cometh all of God, and not of high lineage. If, then, you will swear never to murmur against my choice, I will wive as my heart is set; if not, then I pray you speak no more of this matter.” Now it happened that not far from the marquis’s castle there was a pleasant village, wherein dwelt poor folks that tilled the land, and poorest of them all was Janicola; but he was rich in the richest of blessings—a daughter fair enough to sight, and better still than she was fair. Let the exquisite pen of Chaucer give us her picture.

“But for to speak of virtuous beauty,
Then was she one the fairest under sun;
Full poorly yfostered up was she;
No likerous lust was in her heart yrun;
Well ofter of the well than of the tun
She drank, and for she wouldè virtue please,
She knew well labour, but no idle ease.

“But though this maiden tender were of age,
Yet in the breast of her virginity
~~There~~ was inclosed sad and ripe courage:
And in great reverence and charity
Her oldè poorè father fostered she;
A few sheep spinning on the field she kept,
She wouldè not be idle till she slept.

“And when she homeward came she wouldè bring
Wortès and other herbès timès oft,
The which she shred and seethed for her living,
And made her bed full hard, and nothing soft:

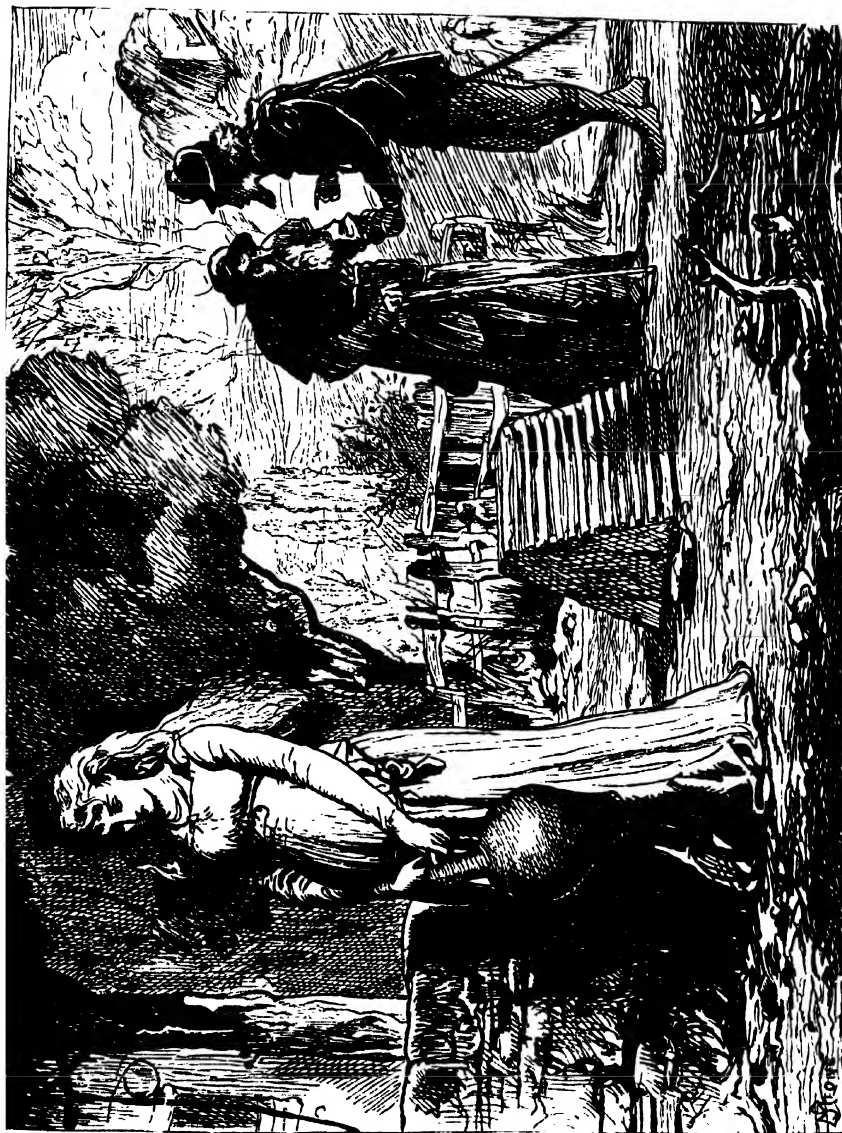
And aye she kept her father's life on loft
 With every obeisance and diligence,
 That child may do to father's reverence."

And Walter, as he rode at times a-hunting, saw the fair Griselda; but he cast upon her no eye of folly, for his noble heart honoured her, and he determined, if he ever took a wife, her only would he wed.

And at last the wedding-day came, and the mansion was in festal array; but none knew who was to be the bride, and men marvelled, and feared that after all the marquis would not keep his promise. Then, somewhat before noon, Walter, richly arrayed, puts himself at the head of his retainers, and with the lords and ladies of his company rides forth to the sound of music to the village. It chanced that Griselda, who was coming home from the well, and had heard of the great wedding that was to take place, went forth with other maidens to see the marchioness pass by. Then the marquis called to her, and she set down her waterpot beside the threshold in an ox's stall, and sank down upon her knees to know her lord's will. "Where is your father, Grisild?" and the maid answered with reverence, "My lord, he is already here," and she brought him to the marquis. Taking Janicola by the hand, Walter led him aside and said, "I know you are a faithful and loving liege man. I love thy daughter, and will take her for my wife unto my life's end. Wilt thou take me for thy son-in-law?" Abashed and all quaking, the astonished hind could only say that his lord's will was his. Then the marquis called the maiden into the chamber where they sat.

"Grisild," he said, "ye shall well understand,
 It liketh to your father and to me,
 That I you wed, and eke it may so stand
 As I suppose ye will that it so be :
 But these demandes ask I first (quod he) "
 That since it shall be done in hasty wise,
 Will ye assent, or ellès you advise ?"

And he asked her would she be ready with good heart to do his will in all things: never to murmur, never to contradict him by word or deed or look. Trembling with fear and wonder, the maiden answered, "My lord, I am not worthy of this honour that ye offer me; but as you so will it, I will do. And here I swear that never willingly, in work nor thought,



will I disobey you." And Walter said, "This is enough, Griselda mine." And then he passed out at the door while she followed, and he said to the people, "This is my wife that standeth here. Honour her and love her, I pray, whoso loveth me." Then he directed the ladies to take her mean garments off her, which they did with little pleasure, being loth to handle her clothes; and they arrayed her in new apparel, and kempt her untressed hair with their dainty fingers, and set a crown on her head and decked her with jewels, so that the people scarcely knew her, she looked so fair and rich. The marquis thereupon espoused her with a ring, and set her on a snow-white horse, and conveyed her to his palace amid the rejoicings of his people.

And now the fair and lowly born Griselda is a marchioness; but by the favour of God she carried herself with such discreetness and benignity that all the people took her to their heart, and every one loved her that looked on her face. Thus Walter lived "in God's peace," for his wife made his home happy, and his outward estate honoured; for by her wisdom she redressed wrongs, appeased dissensions, and in her husband's absence administered his affairs. So lived they, till in fitting time she bare her husband a daughter

Now come the trials of Griselda. A strange desire entered the heart of Walter to prove the steadfastness of his wife's love and obedience. Needless it was, God knows, says Chaucer, to disturb her whom he had ever found good.

"Though some men praise it for a subtle wit,
But as for me, I say that evil it fit
'T assay a wife when that it is no need,
And putten her in anguish and in drede."

So one night the marquis comes to her, and says, "Griselda, thou dost not forget how that I raised thee from thy lowly estate to high dignity. Now listen, and heed every word I speak. Though thou art pleasant and dear to me, yet my gentlefolks say that it is a shame to be subject to thee, that art born of so mean a lineage, and they murmur all the more since thy daughter is born. I would live in peace with my people, and may not disregard their feelings. God knows how loth I am to deal with thy daughter as I must do; yet will I do nothing without thy knowledge and assent. Show now that patience and submission which thou didst promise on our

wedding-day." Then Griselda answered, "My lord, all lieth in your pleasure. My child and I be yours all. Ye may save or destroy what is your own. Do as you will."

"There may no thing, so God my soule save,
Like unto you, that may displeasen me :
Nor I desirè nothing for to have,
Nor dreadè for to lose, save only ye :
This will is in mine heart and aye shall be,
No length of time or death may this deface,
Nor change my courage to another place."

Then was the marquis glad, though he feigned sorrow; and soon after he sent a trusty servant to Griselda, who told her that he must take her child from her, and made as though he would have slain it. "As a lamb she sitteth, meek and still." And she prayed that she might kiss her little one ere it died. And she laid it in her lap and lulled it, and kissed it; and she cried with a piteous voice, "Farewell, my child! I shall never see thee more. But since I have marked thee with the cross of Him who died on the tree for us, may thou be blessed—I commend thy soul unto Him." Then she said to the man, "Have here again the little young maid; but one thing I would pray thee—if my lord forbid it not, bury the little one in some place where neither the beasts nor the birds may tear it." The man carries the child to the marquis, and tells him all that Griselda had said and done. And though he was ruth, yet held he still to his purpose. So he sent the child privily to his sister at Bologna, who was then the Countess of Pavia, beseeching her to foster it in all gentleness as became its condition, but to conceal from every one to whom it belonged. Yet was Griselda unchanged to her husband—as cheerful, as humble, as busy in service and in love as she was wont to be; nor did she ever utter again the name of her daughter. Four years passed away, and Griselda bare a son, and the heart of his father was glad, and his people made merry thereat and praised God. And after two years the marquis must needs again put his wife to the trial, and he said to her, "My people murmur, though they do not complain in my hearing. They say that when I am gone the blood of Janicola shall be lord over them. I would live in peace, if I might; therefore, I am disposed to deal with the boy as I did with his sister. Be patient, therefore, I pray thee." "I have no will but yours," is the answer of the meek and patient woman.

“Ye be my lord, do with your owen thing
Right as you list, asketh no rede of me :
For as I left at home all my clothing
When I came first to you, right so (*quod she*)
Left I my will and all my liberty,
And took your clothing : wherefore I you pray,
Do your pleasánce, I will your lust obey.
For wist I that my death might do you ease,
Right gladly would I dien, you to please.’”

When the marquis saw this wondrous constancy of love, even unto death, he cast down his eyes and marvelled. The same vassal took away the boy as he had taken the girl; and he, too, was sent to Bologna, to be brought up secretly and tenderly. Now her husband knew well that next to himself Griselda had loved her children; yet would he try her still further, notwithstanding that the world began to wonder and to murmur at his cruelty. So after fourteen years he contrived to fabricate a dispensation from the Pope, to put away Griselda and marry another. Sad, indeed, beyond all former sadness was the heart of this meek and patient creature, when this cruel fate was announced to her by her husband. “Certes, Griselda,” said he, “great comfort have I had in thy goodness, thy truth, thy obedience; but, alas! great lordship hath great servitude. I may not do as every hind may. My people constrain me, and cry daily to me to take another wife; and now that new wife is coming, be strong of heart. Give place to her; take the dowry that thou broughtest, and return to thy father’s house.” Meekly she made answer, “My lord, I ever knew how that between your magnificence and my poverty there could be no comparison. Never was I worthy to be your wife, nor yet your servant; and though in this house ye made me lady, I take the high God to witness that I never held me lady or mistress, but humble servant to your worthiness. I will go unto my father, and dwell with him unto my life’s end. My lord, ye wot that in my father’s place ye did strip me of my poor weeds, and clad me richly. Your clothing and your wedding-ring I restore. Your jewels be ready within your chamber. Naked out of my father’s house I came, and naked I must return. Yet suffer me to go forth in such a smock as I was wont to wear. Let me not like a worm go by the way. Remember I was your wife, albeit unworthy.” Then said the marquis, “The smock that

thou hast on thy back, let it be still, and bear it forth with thee." Scarcely had he so said than he went his way, overcome by pity and sorrow. Then Griselda took off all her fine raiment, and in her smock, with foot and head all bare, went she towards her father's house; and all the folk followed her, weeping; yet wept she not at all, nor spoke a word. Yet are her trials not over. Walter sends for her to put his castle in order, for the reception of the wife who is to take her place. Griselda returned at his bidding, and when she had arrayed every chamber and hall, and prepared the feast, she set forth to the gate to greet the new marchioness, who arrived with her brother. And she did them honour and reverence, and praised them with a true heart. Now when they were about to sit down to meat, the marquis called Griselda from the hall, and said to her playfully, "How liketh thee my wife and her beauty." "Right well, my lord," answered Griselda; "a fairer saw I never. God give you prosperity unto your lives' end. One thing I beseech you, that ye torment not this tender maiden as ye have done me, for she was more tenderly nourished, and might not endure adversity, as could a poorly fostered creature such as I." When Walter saw this mighty patience and constancy that endured to the end, his heart gave way. Let our own Chaucer tell the rest with his inimitable pathos.

" 'This is enough, Griselda mine,' quod he ;
 'Be now no more aghast, nor evil apaid,
 I have thy faith and thy benignity,
 As well as ever woman was, assayed
 In great estate, and poorly arrayed :
 Now know I, dearè wife, thy steadfastness,
 And her in armès took and 'gan to kiss.

" 'This is thy daughter, which thou hast supposed
 To be my wife ; that other faithfully
 Shall be mine heir, as I have aye disposed ;
 Thou bare them of thy body truèly :
 At Bologn' have I kept them privily :
 Take them again, for now may'st thou not say,
 That thou hast lorn none of thy children tway."

"When she this heard, aswoonè down she falleth
 For piteous joy ; and after her swooning
 She both her youngè children to her calleth,

And in her arms piteously weeping
 Embraceth them, and tenderly kissing,
 Full like a mother, with her saltè tears,
 She bathed both their visage and their heres."

"And in her swoon so sadly holdeth she
 Her children two, when she 'gan them embrace,
 That with great sleight and great difficulty
 The children from her arm they 'gan arrace ;
 O ! many a tear on many a piteous face
 Down ran of them that stooden her beside,
 Unnethe abouten her might they abide."

What need to tell of Griselda restored to magnificence and honour, of her years of high prosperity? Rather would we draw from it the moral our poet does, how that this story is told, not for that wives should follow Griselda in all her humility—that is not required—but that every one, in his or her degree, should be constant in adversity. For since a woman was so patient unto a mortal man, how much more ought we to receive in all cheerfulness whatever God may send!

Mark, too, how highly our earliest, as our latest, master of song exalts the virtue of humility. As Chaucer makes it the foundation of all the beauty and excellence of Griselda's character, so Tennyson declares

" true humility
 The highest virtue, mother of them all ;
 For when the Lord of all things made Himself
 Naked of glory for His mortal change,
 'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is thine ;
 And all her form shone forth with sudden light,
 So that the angels were amazed, and she
 Followed him down, and like a flying star
 Led on the gray-haired wisdom of the East."

And is this charming tale—this wonderful poet-creature—this ideal woman, clothed in all the graces of meekness and long-suffering, and faith, and love, and obedience, entirely removed above imitation and sympathy? Are there no patient Griseldas now in the world? Do we not meet them every day in the common walks of life? Let woman under her trials take comfort in this, that God who has denied her the physical strength of the

man, has compensated her with a fortitude beyond that of man—"a meek and quiet spirit"—a power unknown, it may be, while her life is serene and cloudless, but shining out lustrous and beautiful in the hour of adversity, as the bow owes all its glory and loveliness to the sunlight shining through the falling rain. And let man thank God that woman is, what she is—wonderful in her strength, lovable in her weakness—as truly the mysterious supplement of his own moral nature to complete the perfect image in which he was made, as she is in her physical being a portion of his once perfect humanity.





U N A.

A MODERN commentator upon Spenser has justly observed that Una, the heroine of the first book of the "Faërie Queene," is one of the loveliest creations of genius. "Her uniform meekness in misfortune, and the gentle serenity of her temper, would have made her insipid in the hands of an inferior artist; but what we see in her is the repose of heaven, and not the apathy of earth; and the tranquillity of the stream comes from its depth, and not its sluggishness." The legend of the Knight of the Red Cross, in which Saint George, the tutelar saint of England, is the type of holiness, details those adventures of that knight which, in a different form, are found in "The Seven Champions of Christendom." There is, however, no reason to believe that Spenser was indebted to the latter work, the publication of which is not proved to have preceded that of the "Faërie Queene." The struggles and trials through which he passes, in that process of spiritual discipline which gradually transforms him from the tall clownish young man who appears before the "Faërie Queene," to a knight accomplished in all virtue, are so much connected with Una, that to portray her character we must to some extent introduce him into the picture. In the

allegory, Una represents Truth, the name probably being intended to indicate the singleness and simplicity of that virtue; and the dragon, the enemy of her kingdom, who is overcome at last by the knight, typifies Error. Yet, as we read this enchanting tale, the allegory gradually fades away from our mind, and the allegorical personages become living realities in the vivid delineations of the poet; and we believe as firmly in the St. George and Una of Spenser, as we do in the Christian and Faithful of Bunyan.

Spenser, in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, thus opens the tale of the Red Cross Knight: "The beginning of my history, if it were to be told by an historiographer, should be the twelfth book, which is the last; where I devise that the Faërie Queene kept her Annual Feast xii days; upon which xii several days, the occasions of the xii several adventures happened, which, being undertaken by xii several knights, are in these xii books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented himself a tall clownish young man, who, falling before the Queene of Faeries, desired a boon (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that he might have the achievement of any adventure which during that feast should happen. That being granted, he rested him on the floor, unfit through his rusticity for a better place. Soon after entered a fair lady in mourning weeds, riding on a white ass, with a dwarf behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the arms of a knight, and his spear in the dwarf's hand. She, falling before the Queene of Faeries, complained that her father and mother, an ancient king and queen, had been by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brazen castle, who thence suffered them not to issue; and therefore besought the Faërie Queene to assign her some one of her knights, to take on him that exploit. Presently that clownish person upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the lady much gainsaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end, the lady told him that unless he could put on that armour, which she brought (that is the armour of a Christian man, specified by St. Paul, vi. Ephes.), that he could not succeed in that enterprise; which being forthwith put upon him with due furnitures thereunto, he seemed the godliest man in all that company, and was well liked of the lady. And eftsoones, taking on him knighthood and mounting on that strange courser, he went forth with her on that adventure; where beginneth the first book."

And now, dismissing the allegory, we behold this "gentle knight" on his adventure, clothed in mighty armour, with silver shield, and curbing the steed that foamed upon the bit. But in chief is he noted by the bloody cross that he bore on his breast and on his shield, "the dear remembrance of his dying Lord." Here is Una, fresh and beautiful from the hand of the poet :—

"A lovely lady rode him fair beside,
Upon a lowly ass more white than snow ;
Yet she much whiter ; but the same did hide
Under a veil, that wimpled was full low ;
And over all a black stole she did throw :
As one that inly mourned, so was she sad,
And heavy sate upon her palfrey slow ;
Seemèd in heart some hidden care she had ;
And by her in a line a milk white lamb she lad.

"So pure and innocent, as that same lamb,
She was in life and every virtuous lore."

The lagging dwarf bringing up the rear completes the picture.

Now the sky is overcast with clouds, which pour down a storm of rain. The party take shelter in a grove, and beguiled by the song of birds they lose their way, and at last reach a cave in the densest part of the wood. The knight, as yet unschooled and rash, dismounts and gives his spear to the dwarf. "The lady mild," wiser than he, warns him of his danger ; but he will not be stayed, and he dashes into the cave. Here he encounters a monster vile, half serpent and half woman, described by the poet with marvellous but revolting power ; and in the deadly contest Una is not far off, to counsel and encourage him when his enemy is coiled round him, and he is well nigh overcome.

"Now, now, Sir Knight, shew what ye be ;
Add faith unto your force, and be not faint ;
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee."

Her words give him new vigour ; he grasps the monster by the throat, and at length cuts off her head. Una is now near to congratulate.

"Fair knight, born under happy star,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lie ;

Well worthy be you of that armoury,
 Wherein ye have great glory won this day,
 And proved your strength on a strong enemy ;
 Your first adventure : many such I pray,
 And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may ! ”

Let us pass over the strikingly fine stanzas which recount the wiles of the magician Archimago, whereby he sends a vision to deceive the knight into the belief that she “whom he, waking, evermore did ween to be the chastest flower that aye did spring,” was loose and light, and unworthy of his pure and knightly love. And so at dawning he rose, and mounting his steed fled away with the dwarf. When the innocent Una finds that knight and dwarf are gone she follows in search,

“ ———sore grievèd in her gentle breast,
 He so ungently left her, whom she lovèd best.”

Then comes that incident so celebrated for the touching beauty with which it is described, made so familiar to us all by the chisel of the statuary as well as by the pen of the poet. Who has not heard of Una and her Lion ? Who has not seen that undraped form of female loveliness, in the marble-cold purity of its statuesque dignity, with her lordly lion-guard ? Thus the poet tells the tale :—

“ One day, nigh weary of the irksome way,
 From her unhasty beast she did alight ;
 And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay
 In secret shadow, far from all men’s sight ;
 From her fair head her fillet she undight,
 And laid her stole aside : her angel’s face,
 As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,
 And made a sunshine in the shady place ;
 Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.”

Then from the thicket rushed forth a lion, hunting for food, and when he saw “the royal virgin” he ran with gaping mouth to devour her, but—

“ Instead thereof he kist her weary feet,
 And lickt her lily hands with fawning tongue ;
 As he her wrongèd innocence did weet.
 O how can beauty master the most strong,
 And simple truth subdue avenging wrong ! ”

Then Una's heart melted with great sorrow, and she wept and said,
 "The lion, lord of every beast in field, doth abate his princely power, and
 in his pride humbles himself to the weak, pitying my sad condition."

"But he, my lion and my noble lord,
 How does he find in cruel heart to hate
 Her, that him loved and ever most adored
 As the god of my life? why hath he me abhorred?"

Then she arose and mounted her palfrey, and went again on her weary
 way. Byron sings—

"Tis said that a lion will turn and flee
 From a maid in the pride of her purity."

But Spenser, with a finer instinct, makes his lion play a nobler part. He
 is touched not by the awe that repels, but by the love that constrains; and
 so, he

"———would not leave her desolate,
 But with her went along, as a strong guard
 Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate
 Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard;
 Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward;
 And, when she waked he waited diligent,
 With humble service to her will prepared:
 From her fair eyes he took commandment,
 And ever by her looks conceived her intent."

At last the faithful servant is slain in defending his mistress from the
 rude assault of Sansloy, who bears her away upon his horse. She is
 providentially saved from his outrages by fauns and satyrs who, hearing her
 shrieks, "the last vain help of women's great distress," leave their sylvan sports
 and run to the spot. How graphically are these rude, wild beings described,
 crowding around the trembling and bewildered maiden, astonished at her
 beauty and, in their uncouth way, endeavouring to show their pity and
 admiration, kissing her feet and smiling on her! till at last, reassured by
 their respectful homage, she rises and walks forward with the unsuspecting
 confidence of innocence, while

"They, all as glad as birds of joyous prime,
 Thence lead her forth, about her dancing round,
 Shouting, and singing all a shepherd's rhyme;
 And with green branches strewing all the ground,
 Do worship her as queen with olive garlands crown'd."

And then they would fain adore her as a goddess, but she the while with "gentle wit" tries to teach them the truth. Here the knight Satyrane finds her—

"Teaching the satyrs which her sat around
True sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound."

Him, too, she teaches "her discipline of faith and verity," so that he wonders at her heavenly wisdom till he loves her and pities her for her unmerited sorrows. But Una is ever true and faithful to the Red Cross Knight, and so she prevails on Satyrane to aid her to escape, in order that she may renew her search for her lover. A new sorrow now awaits Una. Her old enemy Archimago, in the guise of a pilgrim, in reply to her inquiries tells her that he saw the Red Cross Knight slain in an encounter, that day, with a Paynim whom he just left washing his wounds at a fountain. Leaving Una in a swoon, Satyrane hurries to the spot, where he finds Sansloy resting. A fight ensues, in the midst of which Una comes up, and Sansloy runs to seize her. She flies, and meets the dwarf bearing the armour of the Red Cross Knight, whom he had seen borne away, as he supposed killed by Orgolio. Most touching is the detail of her sorrow when the dwarf tells her all the story of the knight's trials. Then her love masters her sorrow, and she arises and sets forth to find her lover, whether he be living or dead.

A splendid piece of descriptive writing now introduces King Arthur upon the scene, arrayed in all the glories of his magic armour, with the shield "Pridwen," the sword "Excalibur," and the spear "Roan." With chivalrous courtesy he accosts the disconsolate Una, and wins from her the story of her sorrows. When she had ended, "Certes, madame," said he, "ye have great cause of plaint; but be of good cheer, for till I have released your captive knight, I will not forsake you." Then his cheerful words revived her spirit, and they went forth, the dwarf guiding them. Arrived at Orgolio's castle, the bolted gates fly open at the sound of the squire's horn. The giant rushes forward. A tremendous battle ensues, which terminates in the death of Orgolio; and Una, who in fear and perplexity has watched the dubious fight, comes forward to greet the conqueror. Entering the castle, Arthur at last discovers the Red Cross Knight in a dark and filthy dungeon, where he has lain for three months. Emaciated and nearly dead, he is led forth. Then with hasty joy Una runs towards him, and weeps over him, and comforts

him with words of welcome and tenderness and love. Arthur, having exchanged gifts of friendship with St. George, goes his way, while Una, ever true and steadfast, proceeds with the latter, as soon as he has somewhat recovered his strength, to accomplish the great object of her life.

Few finer descriptions are to be found in the range of British poetry than the description of Despair sitting in his cave. The picture has all the solemn and sombre colouring with which Dante appals and amazes his readers. A colloquy ensues between him and the Red Cross Knight, in which the former by his terrible promptings suggests to the latter that he should put an end to his life, to escape all the ills which he enumerates. The knight is moved, he wavers and falters ; his crafty foe plies him with new arguments, and offers to him various instruments of death ; at last he reaches to him a keen, sharp dagger. With a trembling hand and a beating heart the knight takes it, and is about to inflict on himself the deadly blow, when Una, while her blood runs cold, springs forward as his guardian angel and monitress.

“ Out of his hand she snatch'd the curs'd knife,
And threw it to the ground, enragèd rife,
And to him said, ‘ Fie, fie, faint-hearted knight !
What meanest thou by this reproachful strife ?
Is this the battle, which thou vaunt'st to fight
With that fire-mouthèd dragon, horrible and bright ?

“ ‘ Come ; come away, frail, feeble, fleshly wight,
Ne let vain words bewitch thy manly heart,
Ne devilish thoughts dismay thy constant sprite :
In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part ?
Why shouldst thou then despair, that chosen art ?
Where justice grows, there grows eke greater grace,
The which doth quench the brand of hellish smart,
And that accurst handwriting doth deface :
Arise, Sir Knight ; arise and leave this curs'd place.’ ”

In what new beauties does this gentle rebuke, noble and dignified, present Una to our view ! We see no longer the tearful, timid, shrinking maiden ; but the grand, earnest woman, in the supremacy of truth and reason admonishing, encouraging, sustaining the drooping and enfeebled man. They seem for the moment to have exchanged spirits—the maid has all the chivalry and fortitude, the man all the weakness and fear. Una sees that her knight is

yet feeble and faint through long imprisonment, and she designs for him that discipline and quiet seclusion which shall restore the powers of both his body and mind. And this brings us to that most exquisite canto, in which we have a picture so holy, so tranquil, so ravishing in its heavenly beauty, that we linger over it with a fond unwillingness to leave it.

“There was an ancient house not far away,
Renowned throughout the world for sacred lore
And pure unspotted life : so well, they say,
It governed was, and guided evermore,
Through wisdom of a matron grave and hoar ;
Whose only joy was to relieve the needs
Of wretched souls, and help the helpless poor :
All night she spent in bidding of her beads,
And all the day in doing good and godly deeds.”

Thither Una leads the knight : the porter, Humility, suffers them to enter, which they do by “stooping low.” Dame Cælia comes forward with matronly grace ; and when she saw Una, whom she knew, her heart swelled with unwonted joy, and embracing her she said :—

“O happy earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet do ever tread !
Most virtuous virgin, born of heavenly birth,
That, to redeem thy woeful parents' head
From tyrant's rage and ever-dying dread,
Hast wandered through the world now long a day,
Yet ceasest not thy weary soles to lead ;
What grace hath thee now hither brought this way ?
Or doest thy feeble feet unwecting hither stray ?”

Then Una replied, “I have come hither, O matron sage, with this good knight, to see thee and to rest our tired limbs.” They were then introduced to Cælia's daughters, Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa ; and when they were refreshed, Una besought Fidelia that she would take the knight into her school-house, so that he might taste of her heavenly learning, and hear the wisdom of her divine words. Fidelia took him and taught him celestial discipline, and opened his dull eyes that the light might shine in upon them. And she disclosed to him her sacred blood-writ book, that none could read except she

taught them. And when he was grieved with the remembrance of his wicked ways, and pricked with the anguish of his sins, so that his soul was dismayed, then Speranza took him and made him lay hold on her silver anchor. And all the while his faithful Una watches his progress with the tenderest anxiety; and when she sees him pass through the discipline of patience and repentance, and hears his groanings, her heart is sore, and she reads "her guiltless garments and her golden hair," for pity of his pain and anguish. At last, when he is cured he is brought to Una, who kisses him, and sweetly beseeches him to cherish himself, and to put away from him those thoughts that were consuming him. Charissa then calls Mercy, who takes him to a holy hospital, where he is placed under the seven Christian Graces, is shown the New Jerusalem, and made acquainted with his name and lineage. "Thou *Saint George* shalt be called be, *Saint George* of Merry England, the sign of Victory." Finally, he is restored to Una, who receives him joyfully, and they set out again upon the great adventure which is ever uppermost in the heart of Una. Arrived at her father's kingdom, Una points out the brazen tower, and they hear the dreadful roaring of the dragon. The knight encounters him, and the fight is told with a vividness that is almost terrible, and one scarce breathes while reading the dubious fortunes of the struggle. Three days did it last. On the first two the knight is miraculously saved when nigh to death: on the third he slays the monster, who falls down like a huge rock whose foundation has been undermined. And all these three terrible days did Una watch the fight in agony and fear—in tears and prayers; and when at last she saw the dragon motionless, she drew nigh and praised God, and thanked her faithful knight.

Now the trumpets blared out their sounds of triumph, and the people assembled in a solemn feast. And the aged king and queen attended by their nobles came forth, and proclaimed the knight their lord and patron, throwing laurel boughs at his feet. The comely virgins, too, came dancing with garlands, making sweet music with their timbrels. After they had feasted, the king said to the knight, "I did proclaim to the world that whoso killed that monster should have mine only daughter to his wife, and be heir to my kingdom. Now since by due desert of noble chivalry these belong to thee, lo, I yield to thee both my daughter and my kingdom." Then he called his daughter, who came forth, bright as the morning star out of the east—

"So fair and fresh, as freshest flower in May ;
For she had laid her mournful stole aside,
And widow-like sad wimple thrown away,
Wherewith her heavenly beauty she did hide,
Whiles on her weary journey she did ride ;
And on her now a garment she did wear
All lily white, withouten spot or pride,
That seemed like silk and silver woven near ;
But neither silk nor silver therein did appear."

And when she came into the presence she made humble reverence to her sire, which added grace unto her excellence. And the king with his own hands tied the holy knots that none but death can sever. And lo, there was a heavenly music as it were the voice of an angel singing before the Eternal Majesty, but none knew whence it came. There was great joy, both of young and old, and feasting and merriment. Thrice happy was the knight—

"Possessèd of his lady's heart and hand ;
And ever, when his eye did her behold,
His heart did seem to melt in pleasures manifold."

Beautiful vision! creature of the poet's soul! "heavenly Una with thy milk-white lamb!" let us, ere thou fadest away, look on thy brightness; that we may take thy picture into our hearts—even as the sunlight transfers the features of those we love into the darkened chamber, and fixes them for ever. Pure and holy and tender—and, above all, true. True when solitary and unprotected—true when assailed by falsehood. Strong and steadfast under trials unmerited, when the manhood of thy knight gave way, because he was frail and faulty. Type of all that woman should be: without a thought to mar thine innocence, or a speck to cloud thy purity!





FALSTAFF.

IN making choice of a character from Shakespeare, one is embarrassed by the number of original creations of the mind of that marvellous genius that present themselves. In his hands few characters could be commonplace, and nearly all his heroes and heroines stand out with as marked and well-defined individuality as portraits. For he seized the speciality of every nature with a sagacity that seemed almost a divine power; and even the exaggerations of some peculiarity by which every one is distinguished from another, are drawn with such inimitable skill that they are rather the heightening of colour than the transgression of outline, and so they generally delight and rarely offend. But Falstaff, "unimitated, inimitable Falstaff," seems to us one of the rarest, most original, and most popular of all the men and women that Shakespeare put upon the stage—"the most complete embodiment of wit and humour ever created by mortal pen." Even the calm, critical dignity of sententious Dr. Johnson was stirred to something like enthusiasm in the description by which he apostrophises the fat knight. "Thou compound of sense and vice; of sense which may be admired, but not esteemed; of vice which may be despised, but hardly detested. Falstaff

is a character loaded with faults, and with those faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief and a glutton, a coward and a boaster; always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous, and insult the defenceless. At once obsequious and malignant, he satirises in their absence those with whom he lives by flattering. He is familiar with the Prince only as an agent of vice; but of this familiarity he is so proud, as not only to be supercilious and haughty with common men, but to think his interest of importance to the Duke of Lancaster. Yet the man, thus corrupt, thus despicable, makes himself necessary to the prince that despises him, by the most pleasing of all qualities, perpetual gaiety; by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged as his art is not of the splendid or ambitious kind, but consists in easy scapes and sallies of levity, which make sport, but raise no envy."

Jack Falstaff is no historical character: we know him only through Shakespeare, who has given him a fame as wide as it is enduring in his plays of "*Henry IV.*" and "*The Merry Wives of Windsor.*" In the former drama it may be readily believed that he at once became a prominent attraction, as the first quarto edition, 1598, is entitled, "*The History of Henrie the Fourth: with the humerous conceits of Sir John Falstallfe.*" There is a tradition, which has gained general acceptance, that Elizabeth was so delighted with the knight that she directed the poet to present him to the world as a lover.

Falstaff in love! one cannot imagine it. There was no room for such a passion in his gay, dissolute, false, and selfish nature. Falstaff in love would be Falstaff no longer. The transformation would be more complete than that of the grub into the butterfly. Impossible as the task may appear, the boundless resources of Shakespeare's genius accomplished it. Jack comes out, in "*The Merry Wives of Windsor,*" as a lover, but Jack still, to the heart's core. He does not love in the sense of that noble and unselfish passion, but he *makes* love in a way true to his own nature, stimulated by selfishness, sensuality, and avarice; his simulated passion and his base motives are quickly detected by the wise and merry women whom he would have made his victims, and the issue redounds to his total discomfiture and the delight of all who witness it.

We are first introduced to the knight in the second scene of the first act of the first part of "*Henry IV.*," in the young Prince's house, of whom he inquires what time of day it is. The latter opens upon him with a

torrent of bantering scurrility, which gives us at once an insight into his character.

"Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of tapsters, and dials the signs of drinking-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day."

And mark how Jack meets this charge of drunkenness, sottishness, and sensuality. Is he angry—does he deny—does he extenuate? Not a bit. He rather enjoys the princely quips, and answers with imperturbable good humour and astounding impudence.

"Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we, that take purses, go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phœbus. And I prythee, sweet wag, when thou art king—as God save thy grace (majesty, I should say, for grace thou wilt have none) marry then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let none of us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty: let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say we be of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal."

Then follows more bantering and pleasant passages of wit, in which hard knocks are given and taken at both sides, with infinite humour and goodwill, in which the knight holds his own; nay, by his last sally has evidently the best of it, by the affectation of injured innocence.

"Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal; Heaven forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing; and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over; by the Lord, an I do not, I am a villain: I'll be condemned for never a king's son in Christendom."

The Prince knows his man well, and to all this quietly replies, "Where shall we take a purse to-morrow, Jack?"

The word is to Jack as the sound of the bugle to the war-horse. "Where thou wilt, lad: I'll make one; an I do not, call me a villain." Then is planned the robbery of the traders riding to London with fat purses, and the counterplot between Poins and the Prince to rob the robbers, "the virtue of the jest" being "the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper, and in the reproof of this lies the jest."

Every reader of Shakespeare is familiar with this celebrated scene at Gads-hill, and the phrase, "men in buckram," has passed into a proverbial illustration of boastful exaggeration. To heighten the humour of the adventure, Poin removes Falstaff's horse, whereupon the knight frets and fumes and pants, and swears he will not move a foot farther. Then the Prince comes up, and says, "Peace, ye fat paunch! lie down; lay thine ear close to the ground, and list if thou canst hear the tread of travellers." "Have ye any levers to lift me up again, being down? 'Sblood, I'll not bear my own flesh so far a-foot again for all the coin in thy father's exchequer." After a time the Prince and Poin slip away to disguise themselves: the travellers come up, and are bidden to "stand." Jack valiantly incites his companions with big words. "Strike; down with them; cut the villains' throats!—ah! gorging caterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! they hate us youth: down with them: fleece them!" And so they are fleeced, like unresisting sheep, and the knight and Bardolph and Peto sit down to share the booty. Poin and the Prince are on them in a moment, shouting, "Your money, villains!" Jack, to do him justice, strikes a blow or two, and then makes after his companions as fast as he can. "See," says the Prince, "Falstaff sweats to death, and lards the lean earth as he walks along: we're not for laughing, I should pity him."

Now comes that scene of transcendent humour which has nothing to compare to it in the whole range of the drama. One reads it again and again with increased delight. The Prince and Poin are in the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap, where their merry meetings were held, awaiting Falstaff and his gang. The knight enters, heated and weary, yet with his angry swagger. Poin bids him welcome, but he does not condescend a reply. "A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry, and amen! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether stocks, and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant?" Then he drinks, and scorns to notice the banter of the Prince, so full is he of virtuous indignation.

FAL. "You rogue, here's lime in this sack, too: there is nothing but roguery to be found in villanous man—yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it—a villanous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There live not three good men unchanged in England; and one of them is fat, and grows old: heaven help the while! A bad world,



I say. I would I were a weaver ; I could sing psalms or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

"P. H. How now, woolsack ! what mutter you ?

"FAL. A king's son ! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales !

"P. H. Why, you rascal round man, what's the matter ?

"FAL. Are you not a coward ? answer me to that : and Poin's there ?

"POINS. 'Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me a coward, I'll stab thee.

"FAL. I call thee a coward ! I'll see thee hanged ere I call thee coward : but I would give a thousand pounds I could run as fast as thou canst . . . call you that backing of your friends ? A plague upon such backing."

And so he goes on muttering and drinking, and cursing all cowards ; till, to the Prince's query, he tells how four of them took a thousand pounds, which was taken again from them by a hundred—how he was at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together—was eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose ; his buckler cut through and through, his sword hacked like a handsaw (which he displays in proof of his assertion), and he appeals to his companions in support of his story. Shakespeare alone may tell the rest.

"P. H. Speak, sirs ; how was it ?

"GADS. We four set upon some dozen——

"FAL. Sixteen, at least, my lord.

"GADS. And bound them.

"PETO. No, no, they were not bound.

"FAL. You rogue, they were bound, every man of them ; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

"GADS. As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us ——

"FAL. And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

"P. H. What ! fought ye with them all ?

"FAL. All ! I know not what ye call all ; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish : if there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

"P. H. Pray heaven you have not murdered some of them.

"FAL. Nay, that's past praying for : I have peppered two of them ; two I am sure I have paid—two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward ; here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me——

"P. H. What ! four ? Thou saidst but two even now.

"FAL. Four, Hal ; I told thee, four. These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me ; I made no more ado, but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

"P. H. Seven ? Why, there were but four even now.

"FAL. In buckram.

"POINS. Ay, four, in buckram suits.

"FAL. Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

"P. H. Pr'ythee, let him alone ; we shall have more anon.

"FAL. Dost thou hear me, Hal ?

"P. H. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

"FAL. Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

"P. H. So, two more already.

"FAL. Their points being broken, began to give me ground : but I followed me close, came in foot and hand ; and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

"P. H. Oh, monstrous ! eleven buckram men grown out of two !

"FAL. But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back, and let drive at me ; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

"P. H. These lies are like their father that begets them—gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brained, knotty-pated fool, thou obscene, greasy, tailow-keech—

"FAL. What ! art thou mad ? art thou mad ? is not the truth the truth ?

"P. H. Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand ? Come, tell us your reason : what sayest thou to this ?

"POINS. Come, your reason, Jack—your reason.

"FAL. What ! upon compulsion ? No ; were I at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion ! if reasons were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

"P. H. I'll be no longer guilty of this sin ; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse'-back-breaker, this huge hill of flesh—

"FAL. Away, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, you stock fish. Oh, for breath to utter what is like thee ! you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing tuck.

"P. H. Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again : and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this. We two saw you four set on four ; you bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark, now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four ; and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it, yea, and can show it you here in the house ; and, Falstaff, you carried your hulk away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight ! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame ?"

Oh, marvellous, ready-witted, impudent Jack! Shame? He did not know what shame was. Device? He had it at a moment's notice. "By the lord," said he, "I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir apparent? should I turn upon the true Prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true Prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true Prince. But, lads, I am glad you have the money."

Let us pass now over much pleasant raillery, in which Jack's peculiarities are perpetually showing themselves out in the happiest way, and come to that encounter of wits between the Prince and the knight in which the poet, with inimitable skill, makes each give a portrait of the same original. Jack first personates the King, and reads the Prince a lecture on his life and associates, full of humour, shrewdness, and wisdom, concluding, "Yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name." The Prince asks, "What manner of man, an it like your majesty?" And Jack answers in the name of majesty, "A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r lady, inclining to threescore; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff; if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If, then, the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff: him keep with, the rest banish."

Jack is now deposed; the Prince takes his place and plays King, while Jack personates the Prince. The King tells his son of the grievous complaints he hears of him. Jack, as Prince, swaggers and swears that they are false, and is rebuked by the mock King, who continues, "Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee, in the likeness of a fat old man—a tun of a man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of offal, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice, that grey Iniquity, that father ruffian, that Vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villainy?

wherein villainous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?" Jack asks with feigned simplicity, "I would your grace would take me with you: whom means your grace?" "That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff; that old white-bearded Satan." "My lord," responds Jack, "the man I know. But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old (the more the pity), his white hairs do witness it; but that he is (saving your reverence) a vice-master, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, heaven help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is doomed; if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poinz: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff—and, therefore, more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff—banish not him thy Harry's company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world."

One is loth to leave this delectable old fellow, and would fain follow him through all the passages of his life. But that may not be. Yet must we recall to the memory of our readers how the knight comforted himself in the battle-field of Shrewsbury—true to himself, braggart, coward, liar, yet redeeming all by ready wit and impudence. How he offers the Prince a bottle of sack in the hottest of the fight—how he falls down as dead before the sword of Douglas to save his life; his soliloquy upon honour over the dead Hotspur, slain by the Prince, whom he impudently declares he had killed himself, and, detected in his lie, avers that he fought him a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. And then when the fight is over, how vaingloriously Jack carries himself upon his reputation. How he eats and drinks of the best at the expense of the simple hostess, whom he swears upon a parcel-gilt goblet to marry. And the exquisite recruiting scene in Gloucestershire where Sir John goes to pick up his ragamuffins, good-enough food for powder. When the King dies, Pistol comes to tell Sir John the news, who hurries to London, and throws himself in the way of the new King on his progress from the coronation. To his joyous salutation we have that memorable rebuke of the King:—

"I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers;
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamed of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;
But, being awake, I do despise my dream.

Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace ;
 Leave gormandising ; know, the grave doth gape
 For thee thrice wider than for other men.—
 Reply not to me with a fool-born jest."

So poor Jack is banished, and sent to the Fleet by the chief justice.

We may not part with the knight till we see him for a moment as a lover. At Windsor were two fair wives, merry and witty, and somewhat free, as was the fashion of the times, but discreet withal, and loyal to their husbands. Jack is, as he says, "almost out-at-heels," and announces that he means to make love to Ford's wife—"I spy entertainment in her ; she discourses, she carves." And for equally good reasons he courts Mistress Page—"She bears the purse, too ; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty." So he sends letters to both, which they compare together, and find to be word for word. Then those merry women plot how they shall be revenged on the old sinner, and they determine "to entertain him with hope till his wicked fire have melted him in his own grease," and yet "not sully the chariness of their own honesty." Then follow those pleasant passages in which Sir John makes love to the wives with feigned sentiment, and they befool him in return, while all is heightened by the jealousy of the husbands. What need we tell of the buck basket in which the ladies conceal him on their husbands' approach—of his disguise as an old woman, and being soundly thrashed by Ford ; and, in fine, the admirable scene at Herne's Oak after the husbands have been disabused of their fears, and join heartily in the plot to punish old Jack in a manner that Sir Hugh Evans calls "admirable pleasures and fery honest knaverics ;" of the burning and pinching by the fairies as they sing round him, till at last he is exposed to the laughter of all those whom he would have wronged and duped.

Shakespeare did well to let us see the last of Falstaff. No other hand might ever draw him. The hostess of the Boar's Head Tavern describes his last moments as no one else could.

"Nay, sure, he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. 'A made a finer end, and went away, an it had been any Christom child ; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide : for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way ; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbled of green fields. 'How now, Sir John,' quoth I : 'what, man ! be o' good cheer !' So 'a cried out, 'God ! God ! God !' three or four times.

Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of it ; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet : I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone ; then I felt to his knees, and all was as cold as any stone."

A word ere we part with Falstaff. In nothing does the wonderful power of Shakespeare appear more potent than in the creation of this most original character. An "epicuri de grege porcus," placed within the pale of this world to fatten at his leisure, neither disturbed by feeling nor restrained by virtue ; a knave rather than a villain, a man of pleasure rather than a gallant—a coward rather upon the principle of self-preservation than of pusillanimity—selfish, impudent, and lying, he is yet so imperturbable in his good-humour, so ready in his wit, so sagacious in his discernment of character, so acute and wise in what he says—that if we condemn his sins, we cannot condemn the man ; if we do not respect him, we delight in him. As he says himself, "Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me : the brain of this foolish compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent, or is invented on me : I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men."

"Poor Jack, farewell ! we could have better spared a better man."

11397





THE LADY IN "COMUS."

PROFESSOR MASSON, in his essay on Milton's youth, when speaking of his earlier poems, observes with truth that in them "will be found that ineffable something—call it imagination, or what we will—wherein lies the intimate and ineradicable peculiarity of the poet; the art to work on and on for ever in a purely ideal element, to chase and marshal airy nothings according to a law totally unlike that of rational association, never hastening to a logical end like the schoolboy when on errand, but still lingering within the wood like the schoolboy during the holiday." Nowhere does this remark find a more fitting illustration than in one of the earliest, yet most beautiful, of Milton's compositions, "Comus." Throughout this delightful "masque" we are in an element purely ideal: ideal beings surround us, ideal voices address us, ideal songs charm us, ideal music floats above us—while there is just so much of the real, in the brothers and sister, as serves to evoke our sympathies by linking them to humanity.

A word or two upon the origin of this masque, and the place and occasion of its performance, will not be out of season here. Upon the summit of the hill on which the ancient town of Ludlow, in Shropshire,

is situated, and standing on a ridge of rock overlooking the Corve, are still to be seen the keep and other picturesque remains of Roger Montgomery's Norman castle, which was the seat of the Lords President of Wales, from the reign of Henry VII. to 1689. That office was filled in 1634 by Sir John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater. Of his large family of sons and daughters we need only to refer to the three who took part in the masque—John, Lord Viscount Barclay, the third son; Thomas, the fourth; and the Lady Alice, the eleventh daughter. The first of these was about twelve, and the last about thirteen years old at the time. The origin of the poem is ascribed to the fact that these three lost their way when going from Herefordshire to the castle, and were benighted in Heywood Forest, being separated from each other; and on this incident Milton, who was well acquainted with the family, constructed his masque; and it is alleged by Mr. Reed, with much show of probability, that the outline of the plot was taken from "The Old Wives' Tale," published in 1595. Pleasant it is in imagination to reconstruct this magnificent "Castle of Ludloe," as described by Churchyard in his "Worthines of Wales"—the grand state apartment, with the superb escutcheon in stone of the arms of Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII.; and the Great Hall, with its painted window; and the chapel, "most trim and costly, so bravely wrought, so fayre and firmly framed," around the walls of which were sumptuously painted "a great device, a worke most rich and rare," the arms of many of the kings of England, and of the lords of the castle, from Sir Walter Lacie, the first lord, "gallantly and cunningly set out"—and to repeople it with that goodly and noble company assembled on Michaelmas night, 1634, the Lord President himself, "a profound scholar, one that seldom spake but that he did instruct or delight them that heard him," with his wife the Lady Frances, second daughter of Ferdinand, Earl Derby, and their children. Let us look back upon that Michaelmas night, 1634, and see them assembled in that Great Hall, sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, the form of which, now roofless and floorless, may still be traced in the ruins, and is yet called "Comus Hall." Be sure there were present "a large concourse of the neighbouring nobility and gentry," by whom, as Oldys tells us, the president was always attended; and amongst them, most likely, were the justices of the Welsh circuit—Sir John Bridgeman the chief, with Sir Marmaduke Lloyd, Sir Nicholas Overbury, and Edward Waties, Esquire; and scions of the noble house of Stanley, from Northampton,

doubly allied to the Egertons. Henry Lawes, too, was there, and of course his brother William, both celebrated composers; but Henry the most distinguished, the friend of Milton and Waller, Herrick and Davenant, for many of whose songs he had composed music; and a special favourite at the castle, where he taught my ladies music, in which they excelled most ladies, "especially in vocal musick." Henry wrote the music for those charming airs in "Comus," most of which are still extant; and, in the character of the Attendant Spirit, took his part in the songs. Hush! there is a strain of sweet music as the Attendant Spirit descends chanting from heaven, and entering on the stage representing a wild wood, discloses the plot of the masque in those noble lines, "Before the starry threshold of Jove's court"—how he comes to earth, where mortals are unmindful of virtue, to those few who still "aspire to lay their just hands on that golden key that opes the palace of Eternity." Then he tells how the fair children of the noble peer—

"Are coming to attend their father's state
And new entrusted scepter: but their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood."

And, lest their "tender age might suffer peril," he is dispatched to defend and guard them. For, as he narrates, Comus, the son of Circe, had betaken himself to this ominous wood—

"Offering to every weary traveller
His Orient liquour in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
Into some brutish form.

. When any, favoured of high Jove,
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from Heaven to give him safe convoy."

Then the Spirit goes to put off his "sky robes, spun out of Iris' woof," and takes the form and habit of Thyrsis—one of the swains of the noble house. Now rushes in Comus, with charming-rod and glass, surrounded with his rout of monsters transformed by his spells; and they revel in dance and song, and wave their torches in the night air, till the tread "of some chaste

footing near" warns them away—"some virgin sure benighted in these woods." Comus alone awaits, having flung the magic dust of his dazzling spells into the air, to cheat with his illusion the eye of the maiden, so that he may seem to her "some harmless villager, whom thrift keeps up about his country gear." Now enters the heroine of this beautiful poem, around whom the poet throws throughout all the charms of wisdom, fortitude, and virtue. She has heard "the sound of riot and ill-managed merriment," as she wanders "in the blind mazes of this tangled wood," when her brothers had left her to bring her "berries, or such cooling fruit as the kind hospitable woods provide." She finds the spot "whence even now the tumult of wild mirth was rife," dark and lone and silent, and thus she stays her soul with the courage of her pure nature.

"A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound,
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.—
O welcome, pure-ey'd Faith—white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings;
And thou, unblemished form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail'd."

Lo, as if to reassure her, a gleam of light comes from heaven—

"There does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night."

With new-enlivened spirits she essays to call her brothers. She cannot halloo as men do, but she can sing as women only can; and she utters that ravishing song whose exquisitely modulated cadences and poetic beauty place it amongst the finest lyrics of our language :—

"Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell."

Well may Comus exclaim of these strains--

"How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven-down
Of darkness, till it smil'd!"

She tells her tale to the seeming shepherd, who offers to search for her brothers, and to conduct her to a place of safety. She accepts the offered courtesy, and goes with her treacherous guide, offering a prayer to Heaven.

"Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportion'd strength!"

The Brothers now appear on the scene, searching for their lost sister. The characters of the two youths are admirably contrasted. The elder, brave and reliant, answers the misgivings of the younger and the weaker, with a noble confidence in his sister.

"I do not think my Sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in Virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk."

While the younger feels the truth of these remarks he is not reassured: he fears for the unprotected loveliness of his sister.

"Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree,
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with enchanted eye,
To save her blossoms and defend her fruit
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste."

But the elder reminds the younger that their sister has a hidden strength, which, though given of Heaven, may be called her own.

“’Tis Chastity, my Brother, Chastity :
 She that has that, is clad in complete steel ;
 And, like a quiver’d Nymph with arrows keen,
 May trace huge forests and unharbour’d heaths,
 Infamous hills and sandy perilous wilds ;
 Where, through the sacred rays of Chastity,
 No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity :
 Yea there, where very Desolation dwells,
 By grots and caverns shagg’d with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblench’d majesty,
 Be it not done in pride or in presumption.

.
 So dear to Heaven is saintly Chastity,
 That when a soul is found sincerely so,
 A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt.

The Attendant Spirit, as Thyrsis, meets the youths and tells them of Comus and his enchantments : how he has heard the song of his young mistress, and rushing to the spot, discovered Comus in the disguise of a shepherd leading her away. The despair of the younger brother vents itself in a reproach to the elder : “Is this the confidence you gave me, Brother ?” and is nobly answered—

“Yes, and keep it still ;
 Lean on it safely ; not a period
 Shall be unsaid for me : against the threats
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
 Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm—
 Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt ;
 Surpriz’d by unjust force, but not enthrall’d ;
 Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.”

And so he boldly demands that they shall at once proceed to slay the “damn’d magician.” But Thyrsis admonishes how little earthly weapons can avail against hellish charms, and explains how with the aid of the plant Hæmony, which he will give, he may assail the enchanter, break his glass and shed the luscious liquor on the ground, and above all seize his wand.



Meanwhile, Comus has carried the lady to his palace, where everything that can entice the senses is displayed—soft music, and tables spread with all dainties. Placed in an enchanted chair, with the rabble of monsters around her, Comus offers her his glass. She puts it from her, and is about to rise; but Comus bids her sit, telling her that if he but wave his wand her nerves shall be chained as though she were a statue. Now comes the trial of woman's strength and fortitude, whereof the brother had so confidently spoken—and grandly does she pass through that trial. With a frown of scorn she answers—

"Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled, while Heaven sees good."

In vain does Comus tempt her with sensual delights, and press on her the cordial "that flames and dances" in the crystal, and asks—

"Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?"

To all his blandishments the maiden replies with the dignity of immovable virtue, reproaching him for his betrayal of credulous innocence, adding—

"Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none,
But such as are good men, can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite."

The enchanter is not turned from his purpose. In a discourse of marvellous beauty and power, he uses every argument which sophistry can devise to overcome her reason and shake her virtue; tells her of the prodigality of Nature, which would be surcharged and over-fraught with her wealth if unused and unenjoyed by man; that—

"Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss."

To all this she listens in silent disdain, not meaning to unlock her lips; but at length, lest it might seem that Virtue had no tongue to check the pride of Vice, she breaks out in the stern rebuke of her holy indignation—

“Impostor ! do not charge most innocent Nature,
 As if she would her children should be riotous
 With her abundance ; she, good cateress,
 Means her provision only to the good,
 That live according to her sober laws,
 And holy dictate of spare Temperance.”

And then she proceeds to answer the false reasoning of him “ that dares arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words against the sun-clad Power of Chastity,” till she has exposed and refuted all his sophistry, and makes the sensualist feel the truth and power of her words, while “ a cold shuddering dew ” dips him all over, as though the words of that imprisoned maid were the thunder of Heaven. As he is meditating one more attempt the Brothers rush in with drawn swords, wrest the glass out of the sorcerer’s hand as he is again proffering it to the Lady, and break it against the ground, routing him and his crew. But they should have seized him and taken his wand, so that, reversing it, they might have dissolved the spell that held their sister bound in strong fetters. Thyrsis, however, is not without a remedy, and Sabrina, the tutelar nymph of the Severn, a sore-trying maiden and the lover of maidens, is invoked in that delicious song whose cadences fall on the ear with the liquid melody of tinkling waters :—

“ Sabrina fair,
 Listen where thou art sitting
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lillies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;
 Listen for dear honour’s sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save.”

And Sabrina listens, and comes to help her, and thus dissolves the spell :—

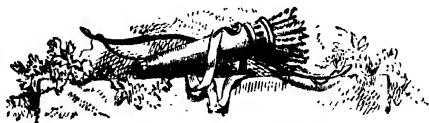
“ Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
 Drops that from my fountain pure
 I have kept, of precious cure ;
 Thrice upon thy finger’s tip,
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip :
 Next this marble venom’d seat,
 Smear’d with gums of glutinous heat,
 I touch with chaste palms moist and cold —
 Now the spell hath lost his hold.”

And the Lady—pure in the midst of all impurity, who held her soul free while her body was bound—triumphant over all her trials—rises from her seat, and flies with her Attendant Spirit and her brothers to holier ground—her father's home. The masque closes with dancing, and a lesson from the Attendant Spirit points the moral of the story.

"Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue ; she alone is free :
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphyry chime ;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

In this most beautiful composition, than which—though written ere he had reached his twenty-sixth year—Milton has left nothing more charming or imaginative, we have the personification of Purity in the character of the Lady, as Chaucer's Grissel illustrates Patience, and Spenser's Una, Truth.

The character of the Lady is unfolded with exquisite skill. We see first the maiden gentle and timid, alone in the darkness, filled with terror, yet immediately looking to God to shield her unguarded innocence ; then comes strength proportioned to her trial ; and, finally, a fortitude and constancy that grow with the necessity of her trial, and sustain her unharmed to the end. We begin with pity, which passes to love, and ends in reverence. We learn, too, from the trials through which the tried one rises to be almost sublime, that, as there is a strength given from Heaven, so is there for the pure a wisdom that cometh from above, greater and better than all the world-taught wisdom of book-lore or philosophy—a wisdom which enables a soul, that preserves its virgin purity, to pierce through and confute the sophistries that would lead it astray, as the sunlight penetrates and dissolves the mists through which everything appears distorted.





SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY.

WHEN the "Merry Monarch"—as his flatterers were wont to call the selfish voluptuary who debauched the morals of the English court—sat on the throne, two children were born, one in Wiltshire, in 1672, the other in Dublin some three years after. Destiny brought them together as boys in the same distinguished school, the Charter House; and there commenced that memorable friendship between Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. That friendship was continued in Oxford, where the wild, wayward, loving Irish nature looked up with affection and reverence to the sedate and loftier character of the English don, already beginning to distinguish himself in the walks of literature. And so that bond held them firmly together through their joint lives.

"Seldom," says one of Steele's biographers, "has the league of kings given rise to more fortunate revolutions in political affairs than the intimacy of these two scholars produced in the literary world. In this case Friendship extended her ordinary influence, and, not restricted to conferring private pleasure and advantage, became the source of public gratification and benefit. The pages of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* teem with the productions of their genius and learning. And not the least delightful of their creations is the product of their joint labour in the character of Sir Roger de Coverley." As Beaumont and Fletcher combined in giving to the world so many fine

dramas, as Guido and Albani wrought on the same canvas to create landscape and figures, so Addison and Steele concurred in the formation of the worthy baronet, who is as much a reality to the readers of the British essayists as Julius Cæsar or George III.

The original delineation of Sir Roger de Coverley undoubtedly belongs to Steele, who wrote the second number of the *Spectator*, in which the baronet is first introduced as a member of the Spectator Club. He is described as a well-known Worcestershire gentleman of ancient descent, whose great-grandfather was the inventor of the famous country dance that was called after him. Let us present him to our readers in the words of Steele :—

“He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy ; and his being unconfined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. . . . It is said he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half ; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. . . . He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty . . . but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour that he is rather beloved than esteemed.”

But though Steele gave the first delineation of this character, it at once became the favourite of Addison—if, indeed, the conception was not a joint one from the commencement. His idea of Sir Roger was a more refined and delicate one than was Steele's, as is evident from some traits and scenes introduced by the latter, which Addison resented so much that Steele surrendered the baronet at last entirely into his friend's hands.

To present Sir Roger de Coverley to our readers in something of a consecutive biography, one has to deviate from the order in which he is noticed in the various papers of the *Spectator*, and to place here and there a sentiment or a humour, an incident or a conversation, in which the character comes out in some salient point. We find Sir Roger tells his friend, the *Spectator*,

while walking in the picture gallery of his country mansion one morning, something of the De Coverleys in general, as he passes each portrait of an ancestor. Here is one who was the last man that won a prize in the tilt-yard in Whitehall. "You are to know," he adds, "this, my ancestor, was not only of a military genius, but fit also for the arts of peace, for he played on the bass-viol as well as any gentlemen at court." Next he shows his great-grandmother, the wife of the tilter, a maid of honour to the queen, and the greatest beauty of her time; and so he reviews the whole family, discovering one of his characteristic foibles, family pride. His discourse throughout, as he comments on the various members of his house, is so full of oddity, mixed with good sense, that one knows not which to be more delighted with, his wisdom or simplicity. The successor of all these ancestors comes to his estate in his twenty-second year, resolved to follow their steps in all the methods of hospitality and good-neighbourhood, for the sake of his fame; and in country sports and recreations, for the sake of his health. Thus he serves as sheriff of his county, and turns out his equipages, officers, and servants in the best possible style. "You may easily imagine to yourself," says he to his friend, "what appearance I made, who am pretty tall, rid well, and was very well dressed, at the head of a whole county, with music before me, a feather in my hat, and my horse well bitted. I can assure you I was not a little pleased with the kind looks and glances I had from all the balconies and windows, as I rode to the hall where the assizes were held."

Now it so happened that when Sir Roger, in all his bravery, came into court he beheld a beautiful creature in a widow's habit, born, as he says, for the destruction of all who beheld her. She was concerned in a suit for her dowry, and, in her charming confusion, she looked from one person to another, and at last cast her bewitching eyes on Sir Roger. Well might the poor baronet exclaim, "A murrain on her!" for from that moment he was a changed man. "I bowed like a great surprised booby; and knowing her cause to be the first which came on, I cried, like a captivated calf as I was, 'Make way for the defendant's witnesses!'" The heart of the high sheriff was wounded beyond all power of healing, and, what was worse, there was no one to salve it, for the lady was "one of those unaccountable creatures that secretly rejoice in the admiration of men, but indulge themselves in no further consequences"—a blue-stocking, who prided herself in the pleasures of friendship, and was always protected by a confidante. Sir Roger did not

know all this at the time, but he had heard that he had obtained the high distinction of having been declared by her to be "the tamest and most humane of all the brutes in the country." On the strength of this slender encouragement, the baronet makes preparation to attack his fair enemy and carry her by storm. His equipments were worthy of the occasion, and with a retinue suitable to his station, he took the field and moved across the country in good order, to pay his addresses. He came, he saw, but, alas! he did *not* conquer. With what a charming naïveté and whimsical self-depreciation does the lover describe his interview with the beautiful and captivating, but artful coquette!

"As I was going to tell you, when I came to her house I was admitted to her presence with great civility; at the same time she placed herself to be first seen by me in such an attitude, as I think you call the posture of a picture, that she discovered new charms; and I at last came towards her with such an awe as made me speechless. This she no sooner observed but she made her advantage of it, and began a discourse to me concerning love and honour, as they both are followed by pretenders and the real votaries to them. When she discussed these points, in a discourse which I verily believe was as learned as the best philosopher in Europe could possibly make, she asked me whether she was so happy as to fall in with my sentiments on these important particulars. Her confident sat by her, and, upon my being in the last confusion and silence, this malicious aid of hers, turning to her, says, "I am very glad to observe Sir Roger pauses upon this subject, and seems resolved to deliver all his sentiments upon the matter when he pleases to speak." They both kept their countenances, and after I had sat half an hour meditating how to behave before such profound casuists, I rose up and took my leave."

From time to time Sir Roger meets the fair widow, but she ever kept him at the same distance and in the same perplexity, addressing discourses to him which he could not understand, and yet ever fascinating him by her beauty and accomplishments.

Disappointed in this his early love, yet ever true to the object of it, Sir Roger's whole life is affected by this crazè, which betrays him at times into a thousand whimsical trains of thought and action; and his raving and inconsistency when his mind recurs to the fair enemy of his peace are generally amusing, and occasionally pathetic. Apart from this, the character of Sir Roger is one of the happiest that genius has ever conceived—so amiable, so lovable, even in its failings and foibles. His kind treatment of his servants, his generous dealings with his tenants, his noble and unaffected hospitality to his friends, are all charmingly depicted. Whatever he says, whatever he does, he says and does in a fashion peculiar to himself.

Take him, for instance, as a justice of the peace, attending the assize court: how amusing is the harmless vanity of this squire, for whom all the justices make room, so that he takes his place beside the judge, to whom he whispers a complimentary observation to sustain his reputation, and finally rises in the midst of a trial to make a speech! "Upon his first rising," says the *Spectator*, "the court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among the country people that Sir Roger 'was up.' The speech he made was so little to the purpose, that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it; and I believe was not so much designed by the knight himself to inform the court, as to give him a figure in my eye and keep up his credit in the country. I was highly delighted, when the court rose, to see the gentlemen of the country gathering about my old friend, and striving who should compliment him most; at the same time that the ordinary people gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his courage, that was not afraid to speak to the judge." Again, what humour, and, at the same time, what modesty, is displayed in Sir Roger's inducing a grateful old servant, who had set up an inn with his master's likeness on the sign-post, to let him have the sign changed, by the addition of whiskers, into the "Saracen's Head!" The sketch of Sir Roger amongst his people on Sunday is delightful and truly English—at least, the English of the olden times. As a good churchman he has beautified the church, erected a handsome pulpit, and railed in the communion table, at his own expense, besides giving to every parishioner a hassock and a Common Prayer Book, to induce them to kneel and join in the services. Then he suffers nobody to sleep in church except himself, and if he happens to nap, on awaking "he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them." All these little eccentricities are received in good part by his tenantry, who love him, and submit cheerfully to an authority which, however oddly exercised, is meant for their good.

"As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants that stand bowing to him on each side, and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent."

Of course such a one as Sir Roger loved festivals and festival cheer, and, after the laudable custom of his family, kept open house at Christmas. Even



in these things there was a dash of his wonted whimsicality. Not contented with distributing liberally eight fat hogs among his neighbours, he sent a string of hogs' puddings and a pack of cards to every poor family in the parish.

And so we have Sir Roger de Coverley living on through the whole series of the papers of the *Spectator*, still preserving, amidst his town companions, all the charming rusticity of the simple country squire, not learned above his neighbours, nor proud amongst his dependents, and bringing with him into the country some of that philosophy which he contracted from his visits to the town.

Ever amusing, never offending, with his heart always right, however his theories might be wrong, and his acts always those of a Christian gentleman, however deflected by eccentricities or obscured by the cloud of a disappointed passion that constantly affected his mind—who could put in the fine touches, the delicate lights and shades in a portrait such as that of Sir Roger de Coverley, but the master hand of Addison? Even we have seen that Steele could not be altogether trusted with the pencil, for he has left one or two marks of too coarse a grain and too strong a colour. And so, as Dr. Johnson tells us, the reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave—"Para mi solo nacio Don Quixote, y, yo para el"—made Addison declare that he would kill Sir Roger, being of opinion that they were born for each other, and that any other hand would do him wrong. Accordingly we have the details of his death, which are as characteristic as those of his life. The old man caught a cold at the county sessions, and died in his own house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness.

"I am afraid," writes his steward, "he caught his death the as: county sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman; for you know, sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin which was served up according to custom; and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed, we were once in great hopes of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life; but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother."

And so he gives his white gelding that he used to ride a-hunting to his chaplain, "because he thought he would be kind to him," as well as "a very pretty tenement, with good lands about it;" and his books to the *Spectator*; and, "it being a very cold day when he made his will," he left for mourning to every man in the parish a great frieze coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood; and to his servants, who had grown grey-headed in his services, pensions and legacies; and a great deal in charity, and money to build a steeple to Coverley Church. Then he took leave of his servants, "commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping." And he shook his nephew, Captain Sentry, by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate, desiring him to make a good use of it. So he passed away, and was borne to the grave by six of his tenants, and six of the quorum held up the pall; and he was laid among his ancestors by the side of his father, Sir Arthur. We read all this as if it were a true tale of one whom we had known through many a pleasant year, who had often made us smile, but never made us sad. Let him repose in our memories with Don Quixote and Uncle Toby, one of the happiest fictions of genius, one of the sweetest extravagances, whose extravagance never outrages nature.





SOPHIA WESTERN.

WITH all his faults, Fielding was one of the greatest novelists that England ever produced. If he were often licentious in sentiment and coarse in expression, these were in no small degree the faults of his times and the true reflex of the society which he portrayed; but his merits were all his own. He painted with the heart of a genius and the hand of an artist. Every character is conceived with truth and delineated with vigour. From the lady of fashion to the chambermaid; from the dissipated man of the town to the humble parson—all are portraits; and though some of them are likenesses of a class that has passed away or been greatly changed, others present to us features that will be fresh in every age, and last for all time.

Of all Fielding's novels, "Tom Jones" is the greatest, and has elicited high praise from the best critics since its appearance up to the present. "The romance of Tom Jones," says Gibbon, "that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escorial, and the Imperial Eagle of Austria." A wonderful diversity of characters, an infinite variety of incidents, a perpetual flow of humour and sprightliness, with no small amount of true feeling, and, above all, a thorough knowledge of the complex workings

and manifestation of human nature in its good and its evil, establish the author's claim to be what Byron happily called him, "the Prose Homer of Human Nature." Yet are we content that this work is *now* read only by the few. There is much to censure and much to regret. Vice, it is true, is exposed; but she is dragged from her den into the highways for that exposure. We have a fine picture of a man with nobility of heart and frankness of nature, but sullied with faults that the age of Fielding regarded with complacency, and our own visits with but a mild censure. Still, let us believe that the object of the writer was, as he tells us, "to inculcate that virtue and innocence can scarce ever be injured but by indiscretion; and that it is this alone which often betrays them into the snares that deceit and villany spread for them." Fielding "painted life as it was, with all its shades, and more than all its lights, which it occasionally exhibits, to relieve them;" and we believe with Scott, that the perusal of this novel has not added one libertine to the large list, who would not have been such had it never crossed the press.

In this romance, two personages stand out in perfection that is almost faultless—the one, Allworthy, the genuine portraiture of a contemporary of the author—Ralph Allen, of Prior Park, near Bath, who spent a large fortune in splendid hospitality and the most extensive charities; the other, Sophia Western, whom we propose to take as our special character.

We are first introduced to Sophia Western when she is in her eighteenth year, the daughter of a Somersetshire squire of ample fortune, now a widower—a type of that class of country gentlemen which, then common, is now happily all but extinct. Coarse, uneducated, obstinate, passionate, and boisterous, yet not without generosity and good-nature; one who loved his horses, his dogs, and his bottle more than anything in the world, except himself and his daughter. But he is too selfish to allow even her to thwart him in anything, and persecutes her at times with as much practical unkindness as if he had no love for her. The squire has a maiden sister with whom he is perpetually quarrelling, as she has many of his own failings, though somewhat differently developed—for she has spent much of her life in London society, which the squire despises and detests, and is a great stickler for the courtesies and formalities of high life. In one thing alone brother and sister agree—in loving Sophia, each in a different fashion; and their constant contention about the treatment of her is infinitely amusing, while they both present a fine contrast to the beautiful and amiable girl. Upon the portraiture

of this last Fielding has bestowed all his care. Here is the sketch of her person :—

"Her shape was not only exact, but extremely delicate : and the nice proportion of her arms promised the truest symmetry in her limbs. Her hair, which was black, was so luxuriant that it reached her middle, before she cut it to comply with the modern fashion ; and it was now curled so gracefully in her neck that few could believe it to be her own. If envy could find any part of her face which demanded less commendation than the rest, it might possibly think her forehead might have been higher without prejudice to her. Her eyebrows were full, even, and arched beyond the power of art to imitate. Her black eyes had a lustre in them which all her softness could not extinguish."

One cannot help thinking, while reading this description of a beautiful woman, that Fielding drew his portrait not from fancy, but reality. From childhood to opening womanhood this girl grew up in the country—uncontaminated by the coarseness, unspoiled by the foolish fondness, unsoured by the occasional bursts of ill-humour or severity, of those who loved and petted, and lectured and restrained her—with all the charms of a sweet and simple nature, and the courtliness of true gentility. Allworthy and the squire were neighbours, and their families intimate, and so it was that Tom Jones, a foundling whom Allworthy had adopted, and Blifil, the child of his deceased sister, were the playmates of Sophia from infancy. The contrast between the two boys was marked. Tom was gay, impulsive, passionate, bold, generous, and affectionate ; perpetually getting into scrapes, yet somehow retaining the love of his protector and his friends. Blifil was grave, sober, sedate, and designing. Sophia preferred Tom, and this preference galled Blifil, who contrived many occasions of injuring his rival. And so time wears on, and the boys become young men, and the girl a lovely maid, who now learns to moderate the language of partiality which the child expressed for the wild gay boy, till an adventure reveals to her the state of her heart. The squire in his own way grows daily fonder of his daughter, and he keeps her about him as much as possible. So he made her accompany him in the hunting field, and in the evening, when he returned weary, and flung himself in his chair, and lighted his pipe, with his bottle beside him, he would summon Sophia to her harpsichord to play for him, a duty which she discharged with the utmost pleasure. What a happy picture ! The bluff old squire, flushed with the exercise of the day, and it is to be feared with the indulgence of the bottle, reposing at his ease, with his eyes lovingly fixed on the beautiful girl whose fingers run over

the keys, waking up some favourite air—some old love-ditty, it might be, or a hunting-song—till at last the father's gaze grows less steady, and the lids fall, and rise again, and fall, and he sleeps—the coarse, passionate, swearing old squire subdued by the sweet influences of love and music.

But to resume. One day, when coming from the hunt, Sophia's horse becomes unruly. Tom, who is near at hand, springs from his own and seizes hers by the bridle—she is thrown, but caught by Tom in his arms, whose left arm is broken in his endeavour to save her. He conducts her, however, to her home, where he is handed over to the tender mercies of the surgeon, treated *secundum artem*, and then put to bed. The squire, who had always liked Tom, now began to love him for his saving Sophia, and insists on keeping him in the house till he is well. It was but natural that Sophia should be grateful. She soon discovered that she felt a tenderer sentiment, and the flame of love was fanned by Mrs. Honour, her maid, who details various symptoms of Tom's passion, and launches out in praises of his person.

Renewed intercourse but deepens his passion, and his mind is harassed by the conflict between his love on the one hand, and honour on the other, till an incident reveals to him that his passion is returned. Too honourable to seek her love, every attempt to conceal his feelings but betrays them to Sophia, and increases her affection. At last the occasion comes, and cannot be resisted, and in a moment of excitement the lover declares his passion, and the next moment entreats pardon for the offence. Fielding puts into the mouth of the girl no false sentiment, or language of affectation; and yet is her candid reply modest and maidenly. "Mr. Jones, I will not affect to misunderstand you—indeed, I understand you too well; but, for Heaven's sake, if you have any affection for me, let me make the best of my way into the house." There is a most amusing and admirably dramatic scene between the squire and his sister, in which the latter hints her suspicions that Sophia is in love. The squire is furious that she should, after all his fondness, fall in love without asking his leave, and swears that he will disinherit her and turn her out of doors. "But," urges the sister, "suppose she should have fixed on the very person whom you yourself would wish, I hope you will not be angry then." "No, no," cries Western; "that would make a difference. If she marries the man I would ha' her, she may love whom she pleases. I shan't trouble my head about that." The lady commends the good sense of this remark, and declares that Blifil is undoubtedly the object of Sophia's love. This delights



the squire, who, however, contrives, as usual, to irritate his sister by some of his rude remarks, and a quarrel ensues. The lady threatens to leave the house. The squire takes alarm, locks up the horses, and then, with the help of Sophia, whom he calls to his aid, soothes the wounded feelings of the lady. The squire proposes the match to Allworthy, and Blifil, though he is incapable of affection for the girl, is very capable of affection for her father's lands and her aunt's money, and accordingly expresses in moderated language his readiness to marry the young lady. Now commence poor Sophia's trials. Her aunt informs her that a lover is selected for her, whose addresses she is to receive that afternoon—"a charming young fellow, that's the truth of it." The girl believes Tom is the person meant, and unfortunately betrays her love for him. Her aunt is horrified and enraged—tells her Blifil is the man, and, after a violent lecture, threatens to disclose all to the squire. Sophia throws herself at her feet, and declares she will never do anything to offend her father; and her aunt consents to conceal the discovery from him.

We shall not follow the narrative of Blifil's courtship. Sophia struggles between duty to her father, aversion to her suitor, and love for one whom she dares not to name; but the girl's true nature and fine sensibilities are brought out with great power, as she endures the passionate vehemence of her father and the lecturing of her aunt. The squire is at length informed of the true state of affairs, and his rage is wrought to the highest pitch when he remembers that he had sent Jones to Sophia in order to reconcile her to marry Blifil. As he bursts into the room with execrations, the girl faints in the arms of her lover, and the father's fury is turned into the most ludicrous distress as he roars for help. Then the poor girl is taken away by her aunt, and the squire vents his wrath upon Jones, offering to take off his coat and fight him. Meantime the artful designs of Blifil have succeeded in misrepresenting Jones to his protector, and this last act of abusing the hospitality of the squire by gaining the affections of his daughter fills the measure of his iniquities, and he is banished from the home where he had been reared. With a sad heart he departs, and an interchange of letters tells of mutual love and mutual despair. The squire locks up his daughter, then the aunt procures her release, and both assail her, each in their own fashion. Tears and supplications are unavailing, for while she is ready to obey her father by resigning her lover, she is firm in her determination not to accept Blifil. At length she learns that she is to be forced to marry him on the following

morning and in her despair she escapes at night with her maid, to seek the protection of a relative in London. We shall not accompany Jones in his adventures, nor Sophia on her journey. The former is betrayed into errors that come to the knowledge of his mistress, and yet exhibits many noble and generous qualities that redeem him. The latter reaches, after many perils, the house of Lady Bellaston, a lady of fashion, of whose morals the less we speak the better. Jones, too, has reached London, and becomes acquainted with this lady, and there, by accident, meets Sophia alone. Tom sues for pardon for his faults, acknowledges his unworthiness, but pleads his passion. The lady reproaches him for his conduct, admits her love, but firmly refuses to disobey her father. The young man swears he will abandon his hopes, though it cost him his life, but will never cease to love her. The interview has reached the highest point of tenderness when Lady Bellaston enters, and understands all, though she affects not to do so. A new persecution awaits Sophia. Lady Bellaston exposes her to the addresses of Lord Fellamar, who prosecutes his suit with an ardour from which she is saved by the sudden appearance of her father, who rushes into the room and bears her away.

A series of providential circumstances reveals Blifil's true character to his uncle, and discloses the falseness of the charges against Tom, who, he finds, is the son of his own sister, and the elder brother of Blifil—a fact which the latter had long known and concealed. Nothing can be better conceived or more happily executed than the interview between Allworthy and Sophia, in which the former pleads the cause of his nephew—whom Sophia believes to be Blifil, while Jones is really meant—till at last he relates the newly-discovered relationship. Sophia declares she will never receive him as one who is to be her husband, for she has good reason to be deeply displeased with him. The squire is as anxious to have him for his son-in-law as he was before to have Blifil. He bursts in, and betrays his usual violence, upbraiding his daughter for not doing what he had so often protested she should never do. A better advocate there is, however, to plead Tom's cause with his mistress, and that is Tom himself. He appeases her anger, removes her distrust, allays all her fears, and gains her consent to their union. And so they are married. We have a glimpse of the couple in after-life, when the squire has given up the family mansion to them, but visits them constantly, having "a parlour and ante-chamber to himself, where he gets drunk with whom he pleases; and his daughter is still as ready as ever to play to him whenever he desires it."



THE SHANDIES.

WE know of no English author, the perusal of whose works brings more mingled feelings than Laurence Sterne's. Delight and disgust, admiration and sorrow, the blush of outraged modesty and the throb of excited sensibility, are alternately called forth; and the final sentiment that remains on the mind is the wish that we could expunge from our literature more than one-half of what he has written. A very necromancer of language, he uses the spirit-words which he evokes obedient to his will, now as the ministers of prurient fancies and ribald equivoques, now to convulse us with laughter at some pleasant, harmless humour, or stir the deepest feelings of our nature at the tale of sorrow—uttering words of wisdom with a carelessness that looks almost like levity, and dealing with the virtues, the vices, the foibles of human nature as freely as the anatomist does with the human body. Of the productions which he has left, the best and the worst is "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman." Its appearance made a great sensation. Horace Walpole, notwithstanding his characteristic ill-nature, was forced to admit that "at present nothing is talked of, nothing admired," but this singular work. Nor is this to be wondered at; for, despite of its sins—and

they are many—even Bishop Warburton found enough in it to commend it warmly to all his friends, and the praise of Leigh Hunt was not misplaced when he observed, "If I were requested to name the book of all others which combined wit and humour, under their highest appearance of levity, with the profoundest wisdom, it would be '*Tristram Shandy*.'" That so much of what is thus attractive should be associated with so much that is repulsive, makes the work, as a whole, a sealed book to many a reader; but, happily, the one may be separated from the other, at least to a great extent. Coleridge well observed that if we abstract the characters of Mr. Shandy, Uncle Toby, and Trim, and suppose in the stead of them two or three callous debauchees, the result will be pure disgust. We propose a process the reverse of that, and shall retain these characters abstracted from the grossness that surrounds them, and hope that the effect will be to delight. Let us then take these jewels out of the swine's snout, and send the unclean beast hence from our presence to her wallowing in the mire.

The Shandy family are the most thoroughly original creations of fiction that we know of—so distinctive in their peculiarities, so generically separated from ordinary people, that we class them by themselves, and give them a specific nomenclature. The name "*Shandean*" has come to represent in men and women peculiar idiosyncracies with certain whimsical theories and pet ideas, which they carry with them everywhere and into everything—riding their "*hobbies*" through life, regardless of what they meet, or against whom they tilt—and yet they do so with all the chivalrous courtesy of true knights-errant.

Let us consider the whole group—for they cannot be severed—not only Mr. Shandy and Uncle Toby, but also Mrs. Shandy and Corporal Trim; for they, too, by long association, have caught something of the infection, and are oddities in their way.

"I believe in my soul," says Sterne, "unless my love and partiality to my understanding blinds me, the hand of the Supreme Maker and first Designer of all things never made or put a family together, where the characters of it were cast or contrasted with so dramatic a felicity as ours was; or in which the capacities of affording such exquisite scenes, and the power of shifting them perpetually from morning to night, were lodged and entrusted with so unlimited a confidence as in the Shandy family."

Walter Shandy, the head of the family, was originally a Turkey merchant,

but had left off business for some years before he is introduced to us, in order to retire to, and die upon, his paternal estate. He was full of eccentricities, yet full of philosophy—saw all things in lights different from the rest of the world—equally regular and systematic in the gravest business and the lightest amusements—with a humour that often rose to wit, and a vein of droll, subacid satire which saw the faults of others in a light so ludicrous, that he seldom failed to raise a laugh against him whom he exposed; yet his strictures were so tempered with the kindliness of his heart, that it was hard to be angry with him. And withal, though he was very patient of wrongs in the main, he had an acute and quick sensibility of nature, attended with a little soreness of temper which, though it never transported him into anything like malignancy, was apt, in the little rubs and crosses of life, to show itself in a drollish and witty kind of peevishness. And these little ebullitions were perpetually displayed in his intercourse with his brother Toby, whom at the same time he loved most tenderly; and whenever, in urging some favourite hypothesis of his own, or combating one of his brother's, he wounded in the slightest degree the feelings of that gentle soul, he would suffer ten times more pain than he gave, and end by the most generous and tender reparation. Indeed, it is in these encounters that the finest points in the characters of the two brothers are exhibited, each throwing light upon the other.

“My father,” says Sterne, in the character of Tristram, “would see nothing in the light in which others placed it; he placed things in his own light; he would weigh nothing in common scales—no, he was too refined a researcher to lie open to so gross an imposition. To come at the exact weight of things in the scientific steelyard, the fulcrum, he would say, should be almost invisible, to avoid all friction from popular tenets; without this, the minutiae of philosophy, which would always turn the balance, will have no weight at all. Knowledge, like matter, he would affirm, was divisible *in infinitum*—that the grains and scruples were as much a part of it as the gravitation of the whole world. In a word, he would say error was error—no matter where it fell, whether in a fraction or a pound; 'twas alike fatal to Truth; and she was kept down at the bottom of her well as inevitably by a mistake in the dust of a butterfly's wing, as in the disk of the sun, the moon, and all the stars of heaven put together.”

In such notable dissertations and curious speculations Walter Shandy is perpetually engaged, bringing to bear upon the subject odds and ends of out-of-the-way learning, and enforcing his theories with the queerest illustrations. Nothing can be more comical than some of these discussions, if such

they can be called, with his wife, whose impassive nature never reasons, but accepts everything with an unvarying assent that is sure to irritate the disputatious temper of her husband.

And now let us come to the most delectable character of the book—we might almost say as delectable a character as ever was described—dear Uncle Toby, “the most perfect character of a Christian gentleman that ever existed.” With all the virtues that usually constitute the character of a man of honour and a gentleman, he possessed the utmost simplicity, the tenderest heart, and the most guileless and unsuspecting nature—indeed, there can be no doubt that we have in him a portrait, in some respects at least, of Sterne’s father—one of “a kindly, sweet disposition, void of all design; and so innocent in his own intentions, that he suspected no one; so that you might have cheated him ten times in a day, if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose.” He had, however, his peculiar Shandean humour; and he had his own hobby-horse, upon which he was so constantly mounted, that they formed as it were but one animal, and a most comical and delightful centaur they made. Hear Tristram on this point:—

“Now the hobby-horse which my Uncle Toby always rode upon was, in my opinion, a hobby-horse well worth giving a description of, if it was only upon the score of his great singularity; for you might have travelled from York to Dover, from Dover to Penzance in Cornwall, and from Penzance to York back again, and not have seen such another upon the road; or if you had seen such a one, whatever haste you had been in, you must infallibly have stopped to have taken a view of him. Indeed, the gait and figure of him was so strange, and so utterly unlike was he, from his head to his tail, to any one of the whole species, that it was now and then made a matter of dispute whether he was really a hobby-horse or no. . . . In good truth, my Uncle Toby mounted him with so much pleasure, and he carried my Uncle Toby so well, that he troubled his head very little with what the world either said or thought about it.”

Now Uncle Toby had served in the wars of King William in the Low Countries, and was present at the memorable siege of Namur by the English and Dutch, where he received a severe wound, from the effects of which he had to be sent home. In his brother’s house in London he lay for four years, nursed with the tenderest affection. Every friend was brought up to chat with the invalid, who detailed the history of his campaigns and his wound. These conversations, in which he fought his battles over again, were highly consolatory to the soldier, but they were very perplexing also; for he got

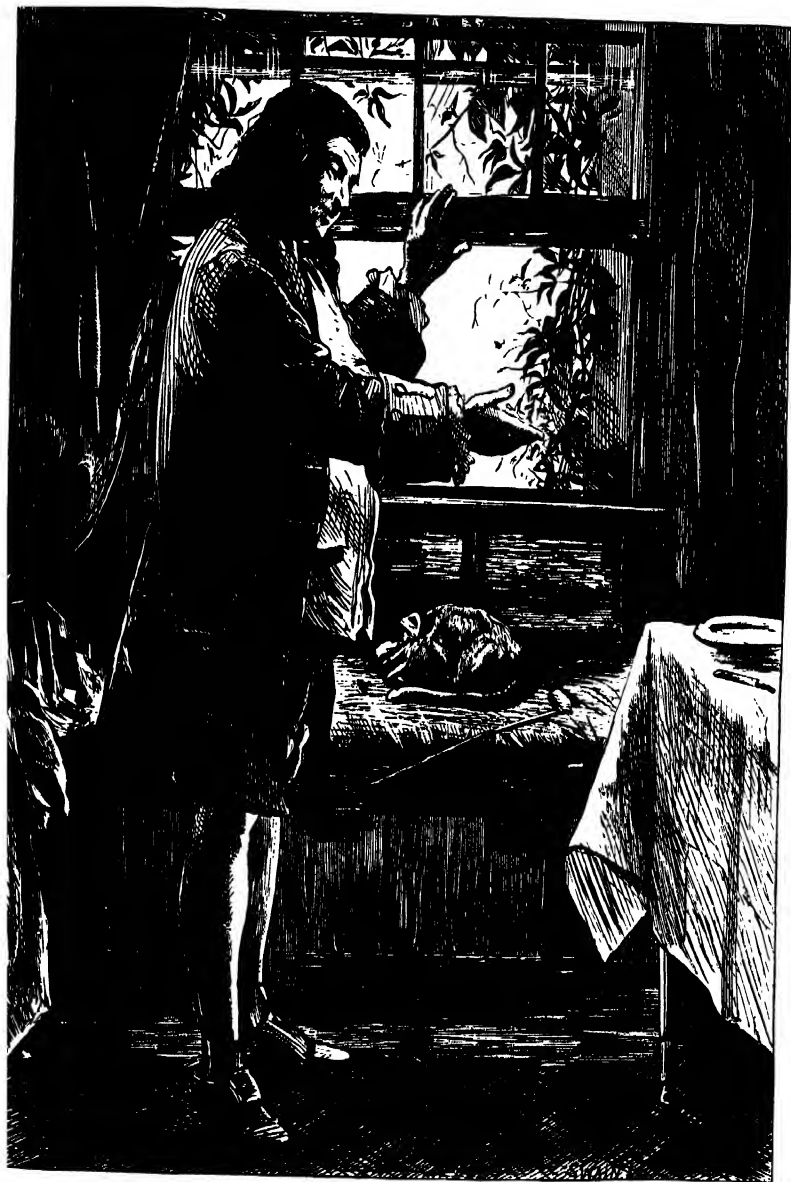
continually entangled in his endeavours to explain scarps and counterscarps, glacis and covered way, half-moon and ravelin, and Heaven knows what else in the way of fortifications ; till at last he hit on the happy expedient of buying a map of the fortifications of the town and citadel of Namur. This saved him a world of trouble, and proved the happy means of getting him his hobby-horse. A fortnight's close application to the map, and reading a work on military architecture, enabled him to discourse right eloquently on the siege. The more he pored over the map, the more he took a liking to it—the more he drank of this sweet fountain of science, the greater was his thirst ; so that, before the first year of his confinement was over, there was scarce a fortified town in Italy or Flanders of which he had not procured a plan ; and so intense was his delight in reading of their sieges, that he would forget himself, his wound, his confinement—and his dinner. And so he went on during the four years, buying maps and books, till he had as many as Don Quixote had of chivalry. The details of these studies are given with surpassing humour. In all this he was aided and abetted by his faithful friend, Corporal Trim (the name by which he always called James Butler), who had been wounded in the knee, and attended Toby as valet, groom, barber, cook, sempster, and nurse ; and by continually attending to his master's discourses, and prying into his maps, became quite infected with his humours. At last, Uncle Toby was pronounced all but well—when lo ! he privately ordered Trim to pack up a bundle of lint and dressings, to hire a chariot and four ; and leaving a bank note on the table for the surgeon, and a letter of tender thanks for his brother, packed up his maps, his books, his instruments ; and, by the help of a crutch on one side and Trim on the other, decamped for Shandy Hall, near which the two enthusiasts actually took possession of a piece of ground where the captain had a small property, constructing thereon fortifications, and successively besieging and taking no end of towns and citadels. In due time, Walter Shandy retired from London, and then the captain took up his abode at his own house adjoining. And this was Uncle Toby's hobby. The love of the two brothers, with their diversities of sentiment and contrasts of character, and yet with something in their natures that was common to both, gives occasion for perpetual displays of the finest humour, often relieved with the most affecting pathos. Thus, when on one occasion Walter wounded Toby's sensibilities by some peevish allusion to his favourite pursuits :—

"Pray, sir, what said he? How did he behave? Oh, sir, it was great; for as soon as my father had done insulting his hobby-horse, he turned his head without the least emotion from Dr. Slop, to whom he was addressing his discourse, and looked up into my father's face, with a countenance spread over with so much good-nature, so placid, so fraternal, so inexpressibly tender towards him, it penetrated my father to his heart. He rose up hastily from his chair, and seizing hold of both my Uncle Toby's hands as he spoke, 'Brother Toby,' said he, 'I beg thy pardon—forgive, I pray thee, this rash humour which my mother gave me.' 'My dear, dear brother,' answered Uncle Toby, rising up with my father's help, 'say no more about it—you are heartily welcome, had it been ten times as much, brother.' 'But 'tis ungenerous,' replied my father, 'to hurt any man— a brother worse—but to hurt a brother of such gentle manners, so unprovoking and so unresenting, 'tis base—by Heaven, 'tis cowardly!' 'You are heartily welcome, brother,' quoth my Uncle Toby, 'had it been fifty times as much.' 'Besides, what have I to do, my dear Toby,' cried my father, 'either with your amusements or your pleasures, unless it was in my power (which it is not) to increase their measure?' "

What a loving and lovable being! how charming in his foibles, how far more charming in his virtues! And yet, patient of injuries, Toby was not so from want of courage—that he had proved on many a field—nor from obtuseness of intellect, or insensibility of feeling, for he was tenderly alive to any slight or injustice.

"But he was of a peaceful, placid nature—no jarring element in it—all was mixed up so kindly within him. My Uncle Toby had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly. 'Go,' says he, one day at dinner, to an over-grown one, which had buzzed about his nose and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time; and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by him. 'I'll not hurt thee,' says my Uncle Toby, rising from his chair and going across the room with the fly in his hand, 'I'll not hurt a hair of thy head.' 'Go,' says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke to let it escape, 'go, poor devil! get thee gone! Why should I hurt thee? This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me.' "

The story of *Le Fever* is too well known to need repetition. In pathos it is unsurpassable, and displays in the brightest colours the qualities of the Christian gentleman and tender-hearted philanthropist. Nor shall we tell of the love passages between the simple, candid soul and the intriguing Widow Wadman. The scene has been already immortalised on the canvas of one of our eminent modern British artists. Nor yet may we linger over the happy madness of Toby and Trim, which lead the latter into all sorts of devices to supply artillery for the sieges: how he metamorphosed the old jack-boots,



which Sir Roger Shandy had worn at the battle of Marston Moor, into mortars; or how he had cut off the ends of Uncle Toby's spouts, hacked and chiselled the sides of his gutters, melted down his pewter shaving-basin, and stolen the lead from the top of the church, to make battering cannons and demi-culverins, to take the field with. Two traits of this most finished portraiture we would commemorate before we close—modesty, as sensitive and shrinking as that of a woman, which is inexpressibly beautiful in the soldier; and the frankness of a pure and simple nature—a frankness which was “not the effect of familiarity, but the cause—which let you at once into his soul, and showed you the goodness of his nature. To this there was something in his looks and voice and manner superadded, which eternally beckoned to the unfortunate to come and take shelter under him.” How can we better take leave of Trim and his master than in the words which Sterne puts into the mouth of Tristram?—

“Tread lightly on his ashes, ye men of genius, for he was your kinsman—weed his grave clean, ye men of goodness, for he was your brother. But what, what is this to that future and dreaded page where I look towards the velvet pall decorated with the military ensigns of thy master—the first, the foremost of created beings—where I shall see thee, faithful servant! laying his sword and scabbard with a trembling hand across his coffin, and then returning, pale as ashes, to the door, to take his mourning horse by the bridle to follow his hearse, as he directed thee; where all my father's systems shall be baffled by his sorrows; and, in spite of his philosophy, I shall behold him, as he inspects the lacquered plate, twice taking his spectacles from off his nose, to wipe away the dew which nature has shed upon them; where I see him cast in the rosemary with an air of disconsolation which cries through my ears, ‘O Toby! in what corner of the world shall I seek thy fellow?’”





"THE RIVALS."

WHEN Dr. Johnson proposed Richard Brinsley Sheridan as a member of the celebrated Literary Club, he passed on him a high and merited eulogy. "He who has written the two best comedies of his age is surely a considerable man." The praise of the sober-minded critic—so chary of his praise in most cases—sounds faint in comparison of that which others have awarded. Every reader remembers the elegant and terse judgment of Lord Byron, which moved the subject of it to tears—"Whatever Sheridan has done, or chosen to do, has been *par excellence* always the best of its kind. He has written the best comedy, the best drama, the best farce, the best address, and delivered the very best oration ever conceived or heard in this country."

Hazlitt calls him "a dramatic star of the first magnitude"—a happy illustration, for he shines amid those of his age like Hesperus among the lesser lights. And, beyond all doubt, his dramas have placed him—to adopt the words of John Wilson Croker—"at the head of the genteel comedy of England." Great things might well have been expected from him. His grandfather, Dr. Thomas Sheridan, was a wit and a scholar—the friend of Swift. His father, Thomas, was an actor and orator, an elocutionist and

a lexicographer ; while his mother, Frances Chamberlaine, was an accomplished woman—a novelist and dramatist of considerable merit. Such were the rays of intellect that converged upon the birth of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, to be absorbed upon the surface of the lens, dark though it seemed in his earlier days, to be emitted in all their diffracted splendour of light and hue when he had little more than attained to manhood.

" Focus at once of all the rays of Fame—
The flash of Wit, the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song, the blaze of Eloquence."

If "The Rivals" is not the best of Sheridan's dramas—and, upon the whole, we think the first place must be assigned to "The School for Scandal"—it certainly is one of the most agreeable dramas in our language. "In the elegance and brilliancy of the dialogue," says Hazlitt, "in a certain animation of moral sentiment, and in the masterly *dénouement* of the fable, 'The School for Scandal' is superior ; but 'The Rivals' has more life and action in it, and abounds in a greater number of whimsical characters, unexpected incidents, and absurd contrasts of situation."

The comedy of "The Rivals" was put on the boards of Covent Garden Theatre when its author was little more than twenty-three years of age. Its reception on the first night, 17th of January, 1775, was unfavourable from nearly its commencement ; and when the curtain fell on the last scene, it might almost, in the language of the stage, be said to have been "damned." One thinks with wonder now-a-days that such a judgment could have been pronounced on this brilliant drama. But many causes operated in producing this temporary failure—bad acting, defects in the structure of the play, and malice. The piece, however, had too much vitality to be suffered to die. Two of the causes were removed, and the third was rendered impotent. It re-appeared in London, and was a success with the critical audience of Bath.

The plot of "The Rivals," without much complication, is very ingenious, and gives occasion for many pleasant surprises and good stage effects. The scene is laid in Bath, at that time the centre of fashion. Every one of note sought this favourite watering-place, for health, for recreation, for society. The idler lounged his hour in the pump-room ; the fortune-hunter was to be found in the circus, the crescent, the parades—everywhere ; the gambler was not absent from the card or billiard table, and the man of pleasure or of taste was seen

at the assembly rooms and the concerts. A fit of the gout brings up Sir Anthony Absolute from the country, with his family, at a moment's notice, for the baronet is hasty in everything; obstinate, irascible, and self-willed, but warm-hearted and kindly when he has his own way. His son, Captain Absolute, is in Bath before him and without his knowledge; for he is wooing, under the disguise of Ensign Beverley, Lydia Languish, whom he met in Gloucestershire, and who has come to Bath under the guardianship of her aunt, Mrs. Malaprop, a widow lady, whose ingenious misapplication of words has made the name proverbial. Lydia and Captain Absolute occupy the foreground of the play. The former is a young lady of great beauty and a large fortune, but full of romance, that makes ordinary wooing distasteful to her: one who looks forward with delight to dangers, difficulties, and cross purposes as necessary to give zest and enjoyment to courtship. And so Jack Absolute, the heir of a wealthy baronet, passes himself off to her as poor Ensign Beverley, and wins her heart. In his sustaining the double character lies much of the liveliness of the play, giving rise to admirable situations and humorous perplexities. Mrs. Malaprop intercepts a note from Beverley, whom she has never seen, and thus discovers her niece's love affair, in consequence of which she keeps her in strict *surveillance*. This, of course, adds fuel to the flame, which gets another accession to its heat by the presence of Bob Acres, a booby squire from the country, who is the professed suitor of Lydia.

A characteristic trait of romantic extravagance is happily introduced. Lydia has never had a quarrel with her lover. This is very insipid. "So last Thursday I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it *Your Friend Unknown*, showed it to Beverley, charged him with falsehood, put myself in a passion, and vowed I'd never see him more." Another pleasure awaits her in the knowledge that if she marries under age, without the consent of her aunt, she loses half her fortune; and accordingly she has determined to do so ever since she learned the penalty. Sir Anthony, meantime, has made up his mind that his son shall marry the wealthy heiress, with whose family he was well acquainted in bygone times; and so he calls upon Mrs. Malaprop, who receives the proposition with great satisfaction, and promises to dismiss Bob Acres, but discloses the fact that her niece has fallen in love with an ensign not worth a shilling. A very amusing interview takes place between Lydia and the seniors. Mrs. Malaprop tries to extort a promise

from her to forget the fellow ; to "illiterate" him from her memory ; desires her not to "extirpate" herself, but to take a husband of her friends' choosing. And when the girl tells her the choice proposed would be her aversion, the aunt replies, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. "I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage, as if he'd been a blackamoor ; and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made him." And she finally dismisses the girl as an "intricate hussy." Sir Anthony ascribes all the young lady's obstinacy to her being taught to read. "Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven ! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet." Mrs. Malaprop calls him a "misanthropy," and gives her views on female education with the most ingenious perversion of words.

Incomparable Mrs. Malaprop ! thou great mistress of language ! with what delight do we read again and again the charming extravagances you commit while "airing your vocabulary !" "Faith," observes Sir Lucius O'Trigger. "she's quite the queen of the dictionary ! for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call, though one would think it was quite out of hearing."

Jack Absolute is a thoroughly natural character ; a fine delineation of a young English gentleman ; a nature loving and lovable ; true to his mistress in all her caprices ; true to his friend ; with a fund of good-humour and good sense, and a courage that bears him up under the crosses that his fair one and his father impose upon him. Though he thinks it likely he could obtain Mrs. Malaprop's and his father's consent to marry the heiress, yet he dares not seek it ; for though he is convinced that Lydia would elope with him as Ensign Beverley, he is by no means certain that she would take him with the impediment of their friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune ; and so he must for a while continue to prosecute his suit as Beverley. On his first meeting with his father, the latter tells his son that he designs an independence for him. Jack is delighted at first, but dismayed when he hears that it is to be coupled with a wife.

"SIR ANTH. Why, what difference does that make ? Odds life, sir ! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

"CAPTAIN ABS. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase. Pray, sir, who is the lady ?

"SIR ANTH. What's that to you, sir ?- Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

"CAPTAIN ABS. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of !

* "SIR ANTH. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to *object* to a lady you know nothing of.

"CAPTAIN ABS. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel.

"SIR ANTH. Then pray let it send an excuse. It is very sorry, but business prevents its waiting on her.

"CAPTAIN ABS. But my vows are pledged to her.

"SIR ANTH. Let her foreclose, Jack, let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming. Besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

"CAPTAIN ABS. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

"SIR ANTH. Harkye, Jack; I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care. You know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted: no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

"CAPTAIN ABS. Sir, I must repeat it— in this I cannot obey you.

"SIR ANTH. Now d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

"CAPTAIN ABS. Nay, sir, but hear me.

"SIR ANTH. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by——"

The captain learns from his confidential valet (Fag) that his father wants him to marry the very girl he is plotting to run away with. Accordingly, when next he meets his father he expresses his penitence, and soothes the old man's temper by assuring him that he is ready to sacrifice every inclination to satisfy his parent. In high good-humour Sir Anthony discloses the name of the lady. How admirable is the dialogue that follows, how well sustained the simulated ignorance and indifference of the lover!

"CAPTAIN ABS. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

"SIR ANTH. Worcestershire! No. Did you never meet Mrs. Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

"CAPTAIN ABS. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet stay: I think I do recollect something—Languish—Languish—she squints, don't she?—A little red-haired girl?

"SIR ANTH. Squints?—A red-haired girl? Zounds! no!

"CAPTAIN ABS. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

"SIR ANTH. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

"CAPTAIN ABS. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent; if I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

"SIR ANTH. Nay, but, Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her

cheeks ! her cheeks, Jack ! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell tale eyes ! Then, Jack, her lips ! O Jack, lips, smiling at their own discretion ! and, if not smiling, more sweetly pouting, more lovely in sullenness !

"CAPTAIN ABS. That's she indeed. Well done, old gentleman ! (*Aside*)

"SIR ANTH. Then, Jack, her neck ! O Jack ! Jack !

"CAPTAIN ABS. And which is to be mine, sir—the niece or the aunt ?

"SIR ANTH. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you. When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket ! The *aunt*, indeed ! Odds life ! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched anything old or ugly to gain an empire.

"CAPTAIN ABS. Not to please your father, sir ?

"SIR ANTH. To please my father—zounds ! not to please—Oh, my father—odds !—yes, yes ; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter—though he wa'n't the indulgent father that I am, Jack."

And now the plot thickens, for Beverley and Absolute must soon be discovered to be one and the same. In the latter character Jack pays a visit to Mrs. Malaprop as the accepted suitor of her niece ; and after much flattery to the aunt, whose foibles he thoroughly understands, the latter mentions the silly love affair of Beverley, and—to Jack's consternation—she puts in his hand his own letter to Lydia, containing a very true but uncomplimentary description of the aunt, with an intimation that he has a scheme—shortly to see his mistress "with the old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview." And so he has, and he carries out his scheme by persuading the aunt to send her niece down to him. When Lydia enters she finds her lover, who tells her he has personated Captain Absolute. Mrs. Malaprop after a time returns, and takes up wrong all that she overhears, and is convinced that Lydia is declaring to the captain her preference for Beverley. She rates her soundly ; declares she's "as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile ;" and apologises to the captain.

Next comes Sir Anthony, who brings his son to present him to the lady whom he is to marry. Difficult enough he finds it to do so. "I don't know what's the matter ; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip." But Jack himself knows very well what is the matter : he knows what a scene of anger and disappointment there is for Lydia, when she discovers that all her darling schemes of elopement and persecution are to be cruelly frustrated by smoothing down all difficulties. "The girl has flung herself in a chair, delightfully rebellious, for she has set her aunt at defiance, and

declared she will neither speak to nor look at the lover who is to be forced on her. The side-play is admirable, the elders each endeavouring to make the youngers advance, and Sir Anthony, utterly unable to understand his son's reluctance—"What the devil are you at? Unlock your jaws, sirrah, or——" Then Jack sidles up to the young lady, who will not deign to look at him, and addresses her in a hoarse, feigned voice. "What the devil ails the fellow?" cries Sir Anthony. "Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking, like a frog in a quinsy!" Then Jack says softly, "Be not surprised, my Lydia——" But she is surprised, for she recognises the voice, looks round, starts up, and cries, "My Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley!" "Ah, 'tis all over!" says Jack. "Beverley!" exclaims Sir Anthony, "the devil!—Beverley! What can the girl mean? This is my son—Jack Absolute." An explanation takes place; Jack offers his apology to Mrs. Malaprop; renews his protestations of love to the offended and disappointed girl, who sullenly answers, "So there will be no elopement after all!" Sir Anthony is rather pleased at the affair, and rallies his son. "Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am. So this was your *penitence*, your *duty* and *obedience*!—I thought it was d——d sudden! *You 'never heard their names before,'* not you!—*What, the Languishes of Worcestershire*, hey?—*if you could please me in the affair, it was all you desired!* Ah, you dissembling villain!—*What! she squints, don't she?—a little red-haired girl*, hey? Why, you hypocritical young rascal, I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!" In fine, he leads away Mrs. Malaprop in high glee, that the young people may be left to themselves. Then follows a scene between the lovers, so admirable that we must give it at some length. Jack addresses the sullen beauty—

"CAPTAIN ABS. (*Aside*) So much thought bodes me no good.—(*Aloud*) So grave, Lydia?

"LYDIA, Sir!

"CAPTAIN ABS. (*Aside*) So! egad! I thought as much! That d——d monosyllable has froze me!—(*Aloud*) What, Lydia! now that we are as happy in our friends' consent as in our mutual vows——

"LYDIA. (*Peevishly*) Friends' consent, indeed!

"CAPTAIN ABS. Come, come! we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured, after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as——

"LYDIA. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

"CAPTAIN ABS. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and—"

"LYDIA. The licence! I hate licence!"

"CAPTAIN ABS. Oh, my love, be not so unkind! Thus let me entreat. (*Kneeling.*)

"LYDIA. Pshaw! what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you?"

"CAPTAIN ABS. (*Rising*) Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you:—if I have lost your heart, I resign the rest.—(*Aside*) 'Gad! I must try what a little spirit will do.

"LYDIA. (*Rising*) Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud. What, you have been treating me like a child?—humouring my romance; and laughing, I suppose, at your success?"

"CAPTAIN ABS. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear—"

"LYDIA. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold, my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and I am myself the only dupe at last! (*walking about in a heat*). But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture (*taking a miniature from her bosom*)—which I have worn night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties! There, sir! (*flings it to him*). And be assured, I throw the original from my heart as easily.

"CAPTAIN ABS. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that! Here (*taking out a picture*), here is Miss Lydia Languish—What a difference! Ay, *there* is the heavenly, assenting smile that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes! Those are the lips which sealed a vow as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar! And there the half-resentful blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks! Well, all that's past; all over indeed! There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you; but, in my mind, its merit over the original in being still the same is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it. (*Puts it up again.*)"

Poor Jack's temper and patience are tried to the utmost. Romance is all very well to a certain point, but it becomes in his opinion an absurdity when followed to the length of inducing a girl to refuse her lover, because she can have him without difficulty. He is in a savage temper, just fit to accept a quarrel put upon him in the gentlest manner by Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

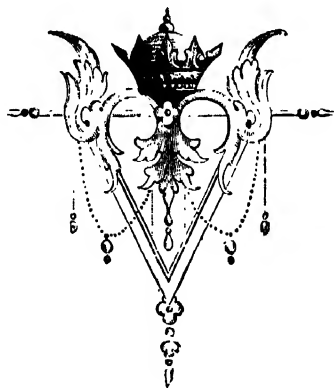
We were unwilling to interrupt the course of our narrative by introducing one of the happiest characters of the piece. Let us now present him. Sir Lucius O'Trigger, of Blunderbuss Hall, is an Irish baronet, with all the aptitude for blundering which is conventionally assigned to his countrymen, but which is found abundantly in other portions of the empire, though often without the point that makes the blunder at once humorous and the paradoxical expression

of some truth illogically expressed. He has, too, the finer qualities of the Irish gentleman—courage that never swaggers, but is ever ready to vindicate his honour—though we must admit his love of fighting is a little too importunate. Proud he is, but too proud to be a fortune-hunter; for while he would seek the hand of Lydia, he tells her maid, “I am so poor that I can’t afford to do a dirty action. If I did not want money, I’d steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure.” Mrs. Malaprop has taken a fancy to him, and writes tender epistles under the name of “Delia,” which he is led to believe come from Lydia. So, finding Jack his rival, he accosts him for the purpose of quarrelling genteelly. Can anything be more comical than his *modus operandi*?—“With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.” Jack declares that he happened just then to be giving no opinion at all. “That’s no reason,” replies Sir Lucius, “for, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.” “Very true, sir,” admits the other, “but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.” Sir Lucius is not to be baffled, and retorts, “Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.” It is plain that the baronet wants to fight, and Jack is in a humour not to baulk his inclinations, though he asks an explanation. The reply is delicious and has become quite a household phrase: “Pray, sir, be easy. The *quarrel is a very pretty quarrel, as it stands*; we should only spoil it by trying to explain it.”

Sir Lucius has another matter on his hands, of the same kind, though not as principal—yet the next best thing—as second, to Bob Acres, an arrant coward, who has been wrought up to send a challenge to Ensign Beverley, by the hands of Jack himself. The scene that takes place at King’s Mead Fields is replete with humour and wit. The perturbation of Bob Acres, the cool, business way in which Sir Lucius proposes a distance of three or four feet between the mouths of the pistols, replying to Bob’s proposition of forty yards as a good distance—“Is it for muskets or small pieces?”—a hint at the possibility of Bob’s getting a quietus from his adversary’s bullet, and a request to know whether he would choose to be pickled and sent home to Clod Hall or laid in the Abbey, adding “I am told there is very snug lying in the Abbey”—all this and much more is inimitable, and we have nothing of the kind better in farce or comedy, save the unapproachable conception of Shakespeare’s Sir Andrew Aguecheek. But we may not linger over the pleasant scene, which

happily terminates without duel or bloodshed. As Sir Lucius and Jack are about to engage, Sir Anthony, Mrs. Malaprop, and Lydia rush in ; swords are struck down by the irascible baronet ; mutual explanations take place, and it is discovered that Mrs. Malaprop, and not Lydia, is the Delia of Sir Lucius ; and Lydia, who has been frightened out of her foolish romance by the fear of losing her lover, gives him her hand and solicits a return of his affection.

Could we wish any change in "The Rivals," it would be the omission of two characters, neither of them quite true to nature—Falkland and Julia. Nevertheless, in taking leave of this brilliant drama, we think every reader will concur in the characteristic sentiment of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, "Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person but what is content."





“THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.”

“THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD” is a domestic epic. Its hero is a country parson, simple, pious, and pure-hearted ; a humorist in his way, a little vain of his learning, not a little proud of his fine family ; sententious at times, but never pedantic, never dogmatical, save on the one hobby of monogamy. A more delightful character never was drawn, a portrait more life-like never was limned by pen or pencil ; and we feel that a living model sat for the artist, however exquisite the art that shaped it into form, and clothed and draped it, and threw around it all the accessories that make the picture one of the loveliest and most enduring ever hung up in the gallery of literature. To tell that story again in other words than Goldsmith’s would be an impertinence, if not something worse : to epitomise its main features is all that we may do. We can but bid the characters of the vicar, his wife, and children pass in review before us like old familiar friends, the sight of whom, even though it be but for a moment, recalls all the peculiarities that make up the individual.

Charles Primrose, the good vicar (in whom we trace many fine points of the character of Goldsmith’s brother Henry, whom he loved so tenderly.



and has immortalised in the "Deserted Village"), when first introduced to our notice, is in easy circumstances, with all the wants of a simple nature and contented mind abundantly supplied; so that we see but the light and harmless eccentricities of his nature—sly quaint humour, without gall enough to become satire, when touching upon the foibles of his wife and daughters; benevolence, unrestrained by cold calculating prudence; easiness of temper, that takes little domestic crosses with the sweetest philosophy, smiling them even into an enjoyment, as sunlight makes black clouds grow bright. By-and-by we shall see the energies of his deeper nature, that have slumbered unheeded—it may be unknown to himself—in prosperity, roused and brought to the surface under the agitation of great trouble. Then all the lighter portions of his character disappear, to be replaced by virtues that make the simple man heroic: faith and hope, ay, and charity, the brightest and purest, which enables him to forgive the man who has persecuted himself and soiled the virgin honour of his child; and fortitude that gives him strength to bear all, rising from each trial with renewed reliance upon God, meek and patient and resigned, till the lowest depth of his affliction becomes the highest elevation of his moral being.

With what a pleasant and innocuous humour does the vicar sketch the members of his family for us! What a sly sense of the ridiculous lurks in the description of foibles that scarcely detract from the worth of the beloved object, while they heighten the effect of the picture! First comes Mrs. Primrose, a model of the parson's wife in the olden times, "a good-natured, notable woman; and as for breeding, there were few country ladies who could show more." Then, "she could read any English book without much spelling; but for pickling, preserving, and cookery, none could excel her." Her love of finery, her ambition to set off her girls to the best advantage, and some other little "amiable weaknesses," complete the picture. Yet one stroke of inimitable pleasantry was added, in the epitaph which the vicar wrote and suspended over the chimney-piece, while she was still living, in which he extolled her prudence, economy, and obedience till death: "It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her: it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end!" Then, the two girls, both handsome, but admirably contrasted. Despite the vicar's determination that one or other of them should be called Grissel, the eldest was named Olivia, and the younger Sophia. Here are their pictures:—

"Olivia, now about eighteen, had that luxuriandy of beauty with which painters generally draw Hebe; open, sprightly, and commanding. Sophia's features were not so striking at first, but often did more certain execution; for they were soft, modest, and alluring. The one vanquished by a single blow, the other by efforts successfully repeated. . . . Olivia wished for many lovers; Sophia to secure one. Olivia was often affected, from too great a desire to please; Sophia even repressed excellence, from her fears to offend. The one entertained me with her vivacity, when I was gay; the other with her sense, when I was serious. But these qualities were never carried to excess in either; and I have often seen them exchange characters for a whole day together. A suit of mourning has transformed my coquette into a prude, and a new set of ribands has given her younger sister more than natural vivacity."

Moses and George are two characters that will never be forgotten: the one for his simplicity, which made him the easy dupe of every schemer, as in the ever-memorable case of the gross of green spectacles; the other, George, who, as the "*Philosophic Vagabond*," gives the world the experiences and struggles and wanderings of Oliver Goldsmith himself.

Sudden misfortune comes to trouble the happiness of this family. His banker fails, and the vicar is a ruined man. The match which George is about to make with the wealthy Arabella Wilmot is broken off by her father, the young man goes to London to seek his fortune as a scholar, and the family retire to a small cure of £15 a year with the wreck of their fortune. On the journey they make the acquaintance of the whimsical and philanthropic Sir William Thornhill, under the assumed name of Mr. Burchell. The vicar relieves him from a temporary embarrassment, and he saves the life of Sophia, who was thrown from her horse into the flood while fording a river. The wife and daughters are not as ready to conform to their altered fortunes as the good vicar. On the first Sunday he has to reprove them with that gentle satire which did not fail in its effects.

"When we were to assemble in the morning at breakfast, down came my wife and daughters, dressed out in all their former splendour: their hair plastered up with pomatum, their faces patched to taste, their trains bundled up in an heap behind, and rustling at every motion. I could not help smiling at their vanity, particularly that of my wife, from whom I expected more discretion. In this exigence, therefore, my only resource was to order my son, with an important air, to call our coach. The girls were amazed at the command; but I repeated it with more solemnity than before. 'Surely, my dear, you jest,' cried my wife; 'we can walk it perfectly well: we want no coach to carry us now.' 'You mistake, child,' returned I, 'we do want a coach; for if we walk to church in this trim,

the very children in the parish will hoot after us.' 'Indeed,' replied my wife, 'I always imagined that my Charles was fond of seeing his children neat and handsome about him.' 'You may be as neat as you please,' interrupted I, 'and I shall love you the better for it; but all this is not neatness, but frippery. These ruffings, and pinkings, and patchings will only make us hated by all the wives of our neighbours. No, my children,' continued I, more gravely, 'those gowns may be altered into something of a plainer cut; for finery is very unbecoming in us, who want the means of decency. I do not know whether such flouncing and shredding is becoming even in the rich, if we consider, upon a moderate calculation, that the nakedness of the indigent world may be clothed from the trimmings of the vain.'"

In their new retreat they are visited by Squire Thornhill, the nephew of Sir William, who allows him to enjoy his estate while he is supposed to be absent travelling. The squire is a man of pleasure, who enjoys a reputation for gallantry and vice, most winning in his manners, and most unscrupulous in the gratification of his passions. Burchell, too, renews his intercourse, and becomes a favourite. He manifestly admires Sophia, while the squire pays court to Olivia. Of course the uncle and nephew do not come into contact, and no recognition takes place. The ball by moonlight gives occasion for the happiest contrast between the unsophisticated daughters of the country parson and the two town ladies of dubious reputation introduced by the squire, and the shifts and devices by which good Mrs. Primrose tries to cope with their neighbours are highly amusing. The grand progress to church on Sunday is told with infinite humour. Mrs. Primrose proposes that the two plough-horses should be pressed into the service for the occasion. The parson objects, insisting that walking would be more genteel; but is overruled, and next morning walked on before to church. He waited in vain, and when the service was over returned towards home, and when half-way back perceived the procession moving slowly forward—"my son, my wife, and the two little ones exalted on one horse, and my two daughters upon the other." They had met a thousand misfortunes on the road. The horses had at first refused to move; till Mr. Burchell beat them forward with his cudgel. Next, the straps of Mrs. Primrose's pillion broke and had to be repaired, and then the horses stood still and would not move either for blows or entreaties. "I own," said the good doctor, "their present mortification did not much displease me, as it would give me many opportunities of future triumph, and teach my daughters more humility."

Let us pass over the Michaelmas Eve at Farmer Flamborough's, when the

parson's daughters were surprised playing hunt the slipper by the two London ladies, Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs, their fashionable discourse ending in their assenting to take the two girls to London as companions; and Mr. Burchell's perpetual "Fudge!" at the end of every observation. Nor shall we recount the expedition of Moses to the fair to sell the colt, and his purchase of the gross of green spectacles; nor the breach with honest Mr. Burchell, when he attempted to dissuade Mrs. Primrose from sending her daughters to London. The other horse had to be sold to furnish an outfit for the girls, and this time the parson himself determined to take the beast to the fair, to prevent all imposition. The narrative of Ephraim Jenkinson's swindling the parson, even more grossly than he had done Moses, is inimitably amusing, and brings out to perfection the simplicity and vanity of the doctor.

At the fair his horse is undervalued by every one, each finding a new fault in him. At last the parson adjourns to a public-house with a brother clergyman, to take some refreshment, where he finds an old man intently reading. "His locks of silver-grey venerably shaded his temples, and his green old age seemed to be the result of health and benevolence." A youth comes in, who respectfully whispers the stranger, and receives a five-pound note to relieve his distress. The parson could have hugged the good man, and when the clergyman, in taking leave of Mr. Primrose, mentioned his name, the old gentleman asked if he was any relation of the great Doctor Primrose, "that courageous monogamist who had been the bulwark of the Church." The doctor is enraptured at the applause of so good a man. "'Sir,' cried the stranger, struck with awe, 'I fear I have been too familiar, but you'll forgive my curiosity, sir; I beg pardon.' 'Sir,' cried I, grasping his hand, 'you are so far from displeasing me by your familiarity, that I must beg you'll accept my friendship, as you already have my esteem.' 'Then with gratitude I accept the offer,' cried he, squeezing me by the hand; 'thou glorious pillar of unshaken orthodoxy; and do I behold——'" The dose of flattery was becoming too much even for the good doctor to digest, and he interrupted the stranger. After much conversation, the latter, in answer to a remark of the doctor, replied—"as if he had reserved all his learning to that moment"—in that memorable harangue about cosmogony. The good parson endeavoured to draw him out, but in vain; the crafty rogue, who had but the one set speech which he learned like a parrot, smiled and shook

his head at every challenge; "by which," observed the vicar with exquisite simplicity, "I understood he could say much if he thought proper." The upshot was that Ephraim bought the horse, and gave him a draft upon Farmer Flamborough, whom he had already swindled. "Honest Solomon," said the cool scoundrel, "and I have been acquainted for many years together. I remember I always beat him at three jumps, but he could hop upon one leg farther than I." The vicar loses no time in presenting the draft. "Yes," said the farmer, "I know the gentleman; the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven. . . . Was he not a venerable looking man with grey hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes? And did he not talk a long string of learning about Greek, cosmogony, and the world?"

The journey of the girls to town falls through, the London ladies decamp, and a letter found in the pocket-book of Mr. Burchell proves that he was the cause of the disappointment. The encounter between Mrs. Primrose and Burchell is a charming piece of humour, in which the points of each character are admirably contrasted, the boisterous attempt at ridicule of the lady being utterly defeated by the calmness of the gentleman. The vicar comes to the rescue of his wife, who is getting the worst of it, and looking sternly at Burchell, and raising his voice, says, "'Do you know this, sir—this pocket-book?' 'Yes, sir,' returned he, with a face of impenetrable assurance; 'that pocket-book is mine, and I am glad you have found it.' 'And do you know,' cried I, 'this letter? Nay, never falter, man, but look me full in the face: I say, do you know this letter?' 'That letter,' replied he. 'Yes, it was I that wrote that letter.' 'And how could you,' said I, 'so basely, so ungratefully presume to write this letter?' 'And how came you,' replied he, with looks of unparalleled effrontery, 'so basely to presume to break open this letter? Don't you know, now, I could hang you all for this?'"

The flight of Olivia and the indignation of the father are told with a curt but pathetic power. With his Bible and his staff he sets out in search of his daughter, falls ill in London, consorts with strolling players, and is entertained at supper in an elegant mansion by the butler, who personates the master in his absence. The latter unexpectedly arrives with his wife and Arabella Wilmot, and extends the hospitality which the butler had commenced. Then comes the scene in which George appears as Horatio in the strolling company, his recognition by Miss Wilmot, and his recounting his adventures as the "Philosophic Vagabond." These vivid and affecting details are no fiction,

but the sad experiences of poor Oliver Goldsmith in his early life, his Continental wanderings and his struggles as a literary hack; and they are still read as throwing a dim sad light on scenes of suffering and penury, which Goldsmith had gone through. The vicar unexpectedly finds Olivia, and learns that her seducer has not been Burchell but the squire, who, she said, had got a Popish priest to marry them, and then abandoned her. The father and child return towards home, to find the house in flames, which consume all his property, and from which his children are with difficulty saved. It is under these trials that the character of the vicar begins to assume that attitude and dignity of the Christian, which make this portrait so lovely.

Fresh calamities come on the family. The squire has the effrontery to visit them with base proposals, is rebuked with lofty and stern indignation by the vicar, and in revenge casts him into prison for non-payment of his rent. As he is being led away his parishioners rise in a crowd to rescue him from the officers of justice, but the Christian pastor at once shows them that such is not the spirit of him who follows his great Master.

“ ‘What ! my friends,’ cried I, ‘and is this the way you love me ? Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit, thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me ? Which is your ringleader ? Show me the man that has thus seduced you. As sure as he lives he shall feel my resentment. Alas ! my dear, deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet, perhaps, one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort, when I pen my fold for immortality, that not one here shall be wanting.’ ”

And so he goes calmly and resignedly to prison.

There is nothing finer than the prison life of the vicar, who devotes himself to the reformation of the miserable and desolate there. Despite of derision, insult, and interruptions, he persists in reading a portion of the Church Service to his fellow-prisoners, and follows it up with exhortations, till he gradually makes an impression upon their seared consciences.

At the present day it is profoundly interesting to read the sentiments of Goldsmith, spoken through the vicar, in relation to reformation of prisoners. In these we find laid down with sagacity and wisdom the fundamental principles that have since been developed into the system which is now adopted by our legislature. So that Goldsmith may justly claim the honour of being the first inventor of prison reformatories.

Meantime the gloom darkens, Olivia pines away, and at last intelligence of her death is brought to the poor father. He had already written to the uncle of the squire, and now that the girl is removed, writes to the squire himself, and sends the letter by Ephraim Jenkinson, his fellow-prisoner, who had formerly duped him, but is now his penitent friend. His overtures are received with contempt, and to increase his misery he learns that his daughter Sophia has been carried off by villains. Another blow follows. George is led in, wounded and in chains. He had sought his sister's betrayer, sent him a challenge, and wounded mortally one of his servants. His crime was capital, but he nobly reproves his father for his momentary despair, and the latter soon regains his fortitude and Christian resignation.

Then follows one of the finest and most affecting scenes to be found in our language—that in which the parson, weak in body, troubled in spirit, weighed down by affliction, gathers around him his family and the inmates of the prison, and delivers that beautiful and touching discourse upon our sufferings in this world and our happiness in the life hereafter, ending with this exhortation :—

"Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven upon us; and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and, like the horizon, still flies before him, yet the time will certainly and shortly come when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure of our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending."

Now, at the darkest hour, comes the dawn. Sophia is saved from the ruffians by Burchell, who brings her to her father. George enters, and discovers Burchell to be Sir William Thornhill. The squire makes his appearance, is severely handled by his uncle, his villanies all exposed by his accomplices. Arabella Wilmot now comes on the scene. She learns that George is not married, as the squire had told her, in order to obtain the promise of her hand. Shocked at the falsehood to which she was near falling a sacrifice, she renews her vows to her first love, with the approval of her father. The squire, now driven to bay, shows himself in his true colours, and impudently avows his villany. But Jenkinson has another blow in store for him, and in a short time comes forward with one who, he alleges,

is the wife of him who sought Arabella's hand. This is no other than Olivia, who was represented as dead in order to overcome the vicar's scruples; and Jenkinson explains that, for his own purposes, he had got a true licence and a true priest to marry her. The squire, baffled on every side, falls abjectly on his knees before Sir William, who is about to spurn him, when the good vicar interposes; and he is dismissed with the assurance that he shall have enough to support the wants of life, but not its follies. Sir William, a humorist to the last, proposes that Sophia shall marry Jenkinson; and when she indignantly resents the offence, he offers her his own hand, declaring that he had long loved her, as he saw she regarded him for himself alone when she thought that he was poor. To complete the happiness of all parties, the merchant who had defrauded the vicar had been arrested with more than sufficient to pay all his debts, and the vicar is thus restored to affluence; and, in fine, Sophia is married to Sir William, and Arabella to George. Hurried and melodramatic as are the final scenes of this delightful story, faulty though it be in its structure, improbable in many of its incidents, and not free from incongruities, even the critic withholds his censure, so charmingly is all worked out; while the Christian moralist extracts from the whole tale the lesson that all things work together for good to them who meekly and patiently resign themselves to the dispensations of Him who chastises those whom He loves.





JOHN GILPIN.

NOTHING in the history of literature is stranger than that William Cowper should have written the ballad of "John Gilpin." Had it appeared anonymously, he would have been the last man in England to whom the authorship would have been assigned. Yet so it is—William Cowper, the poet who gravely instructed mankind in words of sober wisdom, the author of "The Progress of Error," "Truth," and "The Expostulation"—he who, in conjunction with Newton, has left the Christian world the precious legacy of the "Olney Hymns"—above all, the man from the depths of whose gloomy and diseased soul came forth such despairing utterances as "The Castaway"—he it is who wrote this poem, which has, as one of his biographers remarked, excited more laughter than perhaps any poem of the same compass in the world. Let us devote a few words to its origin. The constitutional depression to which Cowper from early life was subjected is well known. It increased with years, bringing at times paroxysms that ended in temporary mental derangement, and pursuing him to the grave. But he had the tenderest of friends to minister to him, to console and to cheer him; and they were of those who are ever nearest to man in his sorrows and

trials—women. His intimacy with Mrs. Unwin and her family at Olney forms the most affecting portion of his biography, and her death plunged him in the deepest and most passionate sorrow. One other there was, whom he casually met at Olney, and whose presence came like a sunbeam to light up and warm his life in many of those fits of darkness and chill despair. This was Lady Austen, the widow of a baronet, familiarly mentioned by him in after days as “Sister Anne.” “She became for a period,” says Mr. Gilfillan, “his blameless mistress—his new muse—his inspiring genius.” When the dark spirit approached, and the gloomy fit came on him, her sprightly conversation, her wit and good-humour, chased away the demon, as the harpings of David drove the evil spirit from Saul. She it was who suggested to him the poem of “The Sofa.” She it was who, one day, to charm away his melancholy, told him the story of the worthy London citizen and his disastrous attempt to keep holiday at “The Bell,” at Edmonton, upon the anniversary of his wedding. So charmed was the poet with the tale, and the humour with which she told it, that he immediately composed the world-renowned poem, which, aided by the recitation of Henderson, made the name of Cowper as famous as did any composition that he ever wrote. So humorous, so harmlessly satirical, so dramatic, so lively, it seized all hearts, and became instantaneously popular: all the more that it surprised the world coming from Cowper. It was like the sunburst rifling a black cloud on an April day, or boreal lightning playing innocuously in a summer night.

In our attempt to epitomise this pleasant tale, we feel how difficult a task we have undertaken; so much of the humour and effect depends on the term of expression—the play of words. To manipulate it is like touching a peach—you are sure to rub off some of the delicate bloom in the process. Yet we must try it. Let us introduce the hero in the words of the poet:—

“ John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.”

No doubt he must have been a citizen of estimation in his ward—a common councilman, it may be—one who, when he had laid his ell-wand aside, would buckle on his sword for those martial exercises which took place periodically. Or the bold draper, having closed his shop, would haply repair to

the civic board, on which was spread, it might be, one of his own fair linen cloths, which were white as snow from the rollers of his friend Tom Callender. To be a captain of the train-band of London was no small honour. An ancient institution it was, dating as far back, the chroniclers tell us, as the days of King Stephen, and in all its glory in the time of the Stuarts; and in 1614 the City had 12,000 trained bands, "citizens perpetually in readiness, and excellently armed." In a curious document published in 1588, when the kingdom was making preparations against the Spanish Invasion, entitled "Order for Marshalling the Citie of London," we read: "The Citie shall be divided into so many quarters as there is fifteen hundreth men. In every quarter shall be chosen one Collonell, a man there dwellinge, and a citizen of Honestie, Reputation, and Wealth, elected by the Maior and Marshall, who shall have under hym tenne Captaynes, all dwellers in that quarter; and everie Captayne shall have a hundreth and fiftie men, all inhabitants in that quarter, which shall be either the householder, his sonne, or his contynewed servant."

Such was Master John Gilpin, draper, of the ward of Cheap, in the good Citie of London. And like all good citizens, he was married to a wife whom he loved tenderly, for she was loving and frugal, and bore him three children. Now, after twenty prosperous years of married life had passed over their heads, and toilsome years too, wherein they had taken no holidays, Mrs. Gilpin bethought her, on the eve of the anniversary of their wedding, that the happy day would be a fitting one to go a-pleasuring. So she proposed to her husband the following programme:—

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
Ail in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

"It shall be done," quoth John, with many expressions of endearment, "and Tom Callender will lend me his horse." "Ay," added Mrs. Gilpin, "and we will bring our own bright, clear wine. I' faith, they would charge us

a pretty penny for wine at the Bell." A kiss from John, in approval of his wife's happy combination of pleasure with prudence, closed the conference. Next morning the chaise and pair came, but Mrs. Gilpin would not allow it to come to the door; for the neighbours, mayhap, envious of her prosperity, might say, "Marry, come up! There's Mistress Gilpin going to ride in a coach—I wonder where her pride will stop? Belike she expects to be the Sheriff's lady one of these days!" So the six precious souls all got in three doors off. Then—

"Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folks so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad."

Now John Gilpin grasps the horse's mane, and gets him into the saddle. But just as he is about to follow the chaise, he chances to see three customers entering the shop; so down he gets, for customers are not to be neglected. When these are at last suited, after much bating and chaffering, down comes Betty, screaming "The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack! ' quoth he —' yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.'"

Betty brings the two stone bottles, and John slips the belt through their ears, slings one on each side, and throwing his long red cloak over all, mounts his steed, and paces cautiously over the pavement, turning his head towards Islington. So when he had passed through the streets (London then was not what it is to-day, for there were green fields and great dairy-farms between Paul's Cross and the merry country village of Islington), and when the horse found a smooth road under his hoof, he began to snort and then to trot. John was but a novice in horsemanship, and felt uneasy in his seat, and cried "fair and softly to the horse, and drew the curb-rein tighter;" but the horse responded by changing the trot into a gallop. The bold draper, unable to sit upright, stooped forward and ingloriously grasped the horse's mane with both his hands. The startled beast redoubled his speed, and away they went, "neck or naught." Away, too, went hat and wig, and then the red cloak, like

a streamer, flew on the wind till, loop and button failing, it flew away and left the bottles exposed at either side. Dogs barked, children screamed; every window was lifted, and so was every voice, crying, "Well done! he rides a race for a thousand pounds!" Every turnpike is opened to let him pass, and as he speeds away, bent down upon the neck of the flying steed, smash go the bottles, down runs the wine, basting the smoking flanks of the horse—away away through "Merry Islington"—slap dash through the Wash of Edmonton, which he flings about him on every side.

Now, his loving wife and the rest of the party were all in the balcony of the "Bell," looking out anxiously for the arrival of John; and much wondering, they behold him pushing on at this furious pace.

" 'Stop, stop, John Gilpin! here's the house!'
 They all at once did cry;
 'The dinner waits, and we are tired:'—
 Said Gilpin, 'So am I!'"

But so was not Gilpin's horse. He had something else in view besides the "Bell" of Edmonton—and that was his master's country-box at Ware, ten long miles away due north, in Hertfordshire. So on he flew, swift and straight as an arrow shot by a strong archer, and never stopped till he stood by the gate of his master's house. The worthy Callender was then taking his pipe and his ease—after his dinner, likely enough—and seeing his friend in such a trim, laid down his pipe, and went with all speed to him. The dialogue between them is too good to be told in other words than the poet's:—

" 'What news? what news? your tidings tell;
 Tell me you must and shall
 Say why bareheaded you are come,
 Or why you come at all?'"

" Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit
 And loved a timely joke;
 And thus unto the Callender
 In merry guise he spoke:

" I came because your horse would come;
 And, if I well forebode,
 My hat and wig will soon be here—
 They are upon the road.'"

Right glad was the Callender to find his friend so merry under his misfortunes: he went straight into the house, whence he issued forth with a full-bottomed wig, and a hat as good as new, and proffering them to the draper, said pleasantly, "Here, neighbour, these will be sure to fit you, for my head is twice as big as yours."

" ' But let me scrape the dirt away,
That hangs upon your face ;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.' "

" Says John, ' It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.' "

The draper then, addressing himself to the horse somewhat boastfully—for he doubtless wished to show a bold bearing before the Callender—said :

" ' I am in haste to dine ;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.' "

Alack-a-day ! at that moment an ass sung forth with a clear, sonorous bray. The horse gave a snort as if he had heard the roar of a lion, and away he went at the top of his speed back again on the road he had come ! John held on bravely ; not so his hat and wig. He and they parted company sooner than their predecessors, for they were too big for John's skull. And now the ten miles from Ware to Edmonton are well-nigh accomplished, and Mistress Gilpin, when she sees her spouse approaching at headlong speed, pulls out a half-crown from her purse, and says to the youth who drove them down, " This shall be yours when you bring back my husband safe and well." The postboy was on the back of one of his horses in a moment, and sallied forth right against the draper as he came thundering down. He made a grasp at the rein of Gilpin's horse, missed it, and made matters all the worse, for the horse was only the more frightened and sped the faster. Away—away went Gilpin, with the postboy clattering at his heels in pursuit !

“Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue-and-cry :

““Stop thief! stop thief! - a highwayman!”
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

“And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space,
The tollmen thinking, as before
That Gilpin rode a race.

“And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.”

The poet concludes this right pleasant tale with a sentiment of loyalty, like a good subject, and a wish that when John Gilpin should again ride forth, he might be there to see his equitation. Alas! the worthy draper hath run his last race long since—to a goal farther than Edmonton or Ware—and shall not come back therefrom, for he hath gone to that

——“undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns.”

And so, too, hath his chronicler; but as long as England has a taste for her literature, or a laugh for genuine humour, so long shall she read Cowper's “*Diverting History of John Gilpin*,” and he, whom love for the memory of the poet or his hero shall lead to Edmonton, can even now get his dinner at “*The Bell*,” where John did *not* dine, and see him upon his flying steed on the sign-board.



"TAM O'SHANTER."

"HALF dust, half deity." What a terribly true description of Robert Burns—all the more terrible from its condensed brevity and pathetic antithesis! With the melodies of angels filling his soul and raising it to heaven, and the vices of our degraded nature darkening and disordering it, and dragging it down to the dust; his inspired hand now sweeping the lyre-strings with a bold, wild stroke, till they ring out music that makes the heart leap up—now touching them gently till they tremble and sigh forth love or sorrow or joy, artless and sweet as the song of the birds that he loved so well.

Of the many pieces which Burns composed, few have attained a greater popularity than "Tam O'Shanter." One of his recent biographers has justly said: "'Tam O'Shanter,' short as it is, is a complete epic, with beginning, middle, end, and moral—a small picture, which, like one of Rembrandt's engravings, exhibits power condensed into the smallest compass." This "*magnum opus*" of Burns, as Byron calls it, displays most of the characteristics of the poet's genius—richness of fancy, rapidity of action; a clear, bright rush of thought, like a highland torrent—humour, sentiment, imagery, imagination. He is never more felicitous than when describing a social meeting over

the "barley bree," for, alas! usquebaugh was his Helicon; and we can scarcely doubt that the portraits of Tam and Souter Johnny are taken from the life, and the carouse at the inn of Ayr is the recollection of a reality. Burns tells us that when he was a boy an old woman resided in the family who had an extraordinary collection of tales and songs, concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, and the like, and we can well believe that the incident narrated in the poem was told by her to the boy; for the old church of Alloway was but a couple of miles from his father's house. And now to our tale.

It is market-day in the town of Ayr: business is over, the winter evening is darkening down, the good folks are leaving the streets to solitude; the wiser are going home, but the drouthy souls are looking out for kindred spirits, and meeting "drouthy neebors" in the street, turning in with them for a stoup. Ah! while they "sit bousing at the nappy," they never think of all the dangers that lie between them and home, when the night is dark, and the way is beset with "mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles," nor of that home itself where the dame sits sulky and sullen, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

Tam was at the market, and well had it been for him had he attended to the advice of his wife, Kate, who knew his besetting sin, and had told him to his face what sort of a fellow he was—

"A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October
Ae market day thou wasna sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller
Thou sat as lang as thou hadst siller;
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on."

And the gude wife prophesied that sooner or later he would be drowned in the Doon, or caught by the warlocks that haunted the auld kirk of Alloway. But Tam, like many another foolish husband, forgot all the sage warnings of his wife, as he planted himself comfortably by the ingle, with the fire blazing finely and bright, lifting to his thirsty lips the pot of ale that "drank divinely," with the creaming foam upon its top.

Tam was in his element—at his elbow sat his boon companion, Souter Johnny—"his ancient, trusty, drouthy crony." So with song and story the night wore merrily on, and every pot of ale seemed better than the former.

"The Souter tauld his queerest stories ;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus ;
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam didna mind the storm a whistle."

How admirably poetic are the lines that follow! what a happy figure that which describes Care drowning himself in the ale, enraged at the happiness of Tam! And then we have another image full of beauty—

"As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,"
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure."

And so Tam was in a state of glorification, more blest than a king, for he was victorious for the time over all the ills of life. And now how exquisite is the transition from the care-defying toper to the moraliser upon the evanescence of pleasure! The reflection comes not more truly from the heart of the man, than the sentiment from the soul of the poet.

"But pleasures are like poppies spread--
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed ;
Or like the snowfall in the river—
A moment white, then melts for ever ;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm."

And so time brings Tam's joys to an end, for it is midnight—the hour that is the keystone in the black arch of night—and he mounts his trusty grey mare, Meg, and issues forth in the black darkness, with the wind blowing as if it were at its last blast, carrying with it pelting showers; and the lightning flashes for a moment out of the gloom, to be swallowed up instantly in the darkness; while the thunder bellows in long, deep roars. But what cares Tam for wind or rain, for mud or mire? Isn't Meg strong and sure-footed? If 'tis cold without, he is warm within; so he holds fast his blue bonnet on his head, and croons an old Scotch song. But now he draws nigh Alloway's auld haunted kirk—an eerie spot for bogles and ghosts and warlocks; and as he glowers round stealthily, one by one familiar and

dreaded spots come in view. Ah! there's the ford where the pedlar was lost in the snow, and there's the cairn where the murdered bairn was found: and at last the kirk itself is close upon him, and through the trees that sway and groan in the storm he sees it all in a blaze, and he hears shouts of mirth and dancing. Tam is pot-valiant enough to face the foul fiend, for he is full of "inspiring-bold John Barleycorn;" but not so Meg: she has only tasted water, and she stands still in affright. If Tam has a spur in the head, so has he one in the heel, which he administers to Meg, and she moves forward into the light. Wow! what a sight! Warlocks and witches a-dancing, and Old Nick playing the bagpipes for them. All around open coffins are ranged, and there are the ghastly dead in their shrouds, and lights in their hands.

"As Tammie glower'd, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew.
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark."

A loathsome-looking crew they were—old hags and withered beldames capering about, half-naked, in this hideous, devil-inspired revelry. Yet one there was among them that caught Tam's eye—a young witch who had that night, for the first time, joined the unholy Sabbath—fair she was, and plump and strong and supple—and with the zeal of a neophyte she performed miracles of saltation in the witches' dance. She had flung off all her clothing, save her shift of coarse Paisley linen. Soberly scanty it was, for her old grandmother had bought it for her wee Nannie when she was but a bairn. As Tam watched how she "lap and flang," he

————— "stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd:
Even Satan glower'd, and fided fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, 'Weel done, Cutty-sark!'"

In an instant all is pitch-dark. Tam gives Meg the spur, but not a moment too soon, for the hellish legion have sallied out, like angry bees attacked in their hives. Away speeds Maggie for the bare life, with all the witches following her, with "mony an eldritch screech and hollow!" Away, away they scamper in that life-and-death race! Tam well knows what will be his fate if he falls into the witches' clutches; he knows, too, that the brig of Alloway is close at hand, and if he can win the keystone, and put running water between him and his pursuers, he is a saved man, and Meg may toss her tail at them. So he presses Maggie to the top of her speed. On, on!—the foot of the bridge is gained, and another stretch will clear its centre.

"But ere the keystone she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carline clauight her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump."

The chase is over. Tam has escaped with the skin of his teeth, and poor Meg with the loss of her tail. Let us pause to take breath—as, no doubt, Tam and Meg did—and to moralise, as Tam didn't, but the poet did for him.

"Whane'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys owre dear—
Remember Tam O'Shanter's mare."





THE HEIR-AT-LAW."

IF George Colman the Younger does not hold a very high place amongst dramatic writers, he has, nevertheless, produced some comedies that were deservedly popular in his own day, and keep the stage even in ours. He had a keen sense of the humorous, and his "Random Recollections" show that he was an acute observer of life, and are the most amusing memoirs of the drama which we possess. Of his dramas, "The Iron Chest" was the ablest and most striking, though it failed on the stage. "John Bull" was a great success, and gained the commendation of Sir Walter Scott. There is, however, another of his pieces, "The Heir-at-Law," that abounds in broad, farcical humour, and much just sentiment, while it has the merit of exhibiting a character that may fairly be considered an original conception. We allude to Dr. Pangloss, a name which has become the synonym for one of those graduates of the less distinguished universities whose degrees were obtained with little money and less reading, who had learning enough to be pedantic, and were too poor to be particular as to the duties they discharged; and thus often became the nominal tutors, but in reality the obsequious servants, of wild

young nobles and booby aristocrats. In the doctor the peculiarities of the species, now nearly extinct, are brought out in high relief, and nothing can be more farcical than his perpetual quotations from classical authors.

The piece was first put upon the stage at the Haymarket Theatre, on the 15th of July, 1797. Daniel Dowlas, who kept a general assortment shop in Gosport, is suddenly elevated to rank and wealth, as Lord Duberly, for the old lord, in the words of the new one, "was supposed to die without any heir to his estate—as the doctors say, of an implication of disorders—and that his son, Henry Morland, was lost some time ago in the salt sea." Lawyer Ferret hunted him out, lugged him from the counter, to clap him into a coach, a house in Hanover Square, and an estate in the country worth fifteen thousand a year. He is illiterate, vulgar, and coarse, yet possessing the redeeming qualities of a right heart, an easy temper, a kindly nature, and is not ashamed to remember his former condition of life. His wife, Deborah, is more vulgar, because she has the vulgarity of mind, and not of mere class or manner, more ambitious and pretentious, and endeavours to play the fine lady, by being bold and arrogant, aping the failings of the aristocracy, which she mistakes for the true signs of fashion and good-breeding. Much of the comic effect of the play is produced in the scenes between these two—the former committing all sorts of blunders in speech, uttering sentiments unsuited to his new position, with a constant recurrence to the shop, and a due submission to my lady's superior intellect and knowledge of high life, whom he considers "as genteel already as if she had been born a duchess;" the latter is constantly correcting the faults of her husband, interdicting all allusion to his Gosport life, and yet ever betraying her own vulgarity through the transparent lacquer of affected gentility. Doctor Pangloss has been engaged to mould the manners and correct the "cakelology" of the new lord, who thus addresses him on his first appearance on the stage :—

" Doctor, good morning—I wish you a bone repos! Take a chair, doctor.

" PAN. Pardon me, my lord; I am not inclined to be sedentary. I wish, with permission, 'Erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.' Ovid.—Hem!

" DUB. Tollory vultures! I suppose that means you had rather stand.

" PAN. Fie! This is a locomotive morning with me: just hurried, my lord, from the Society of Arts, whence, I may say, I have borne my blushing honours thick upon me.' Shakspeare.—Hem!

" DUB. And what has put your honours to the blush this morning, doctor?

"PAN. To the blush ! A ludicrous perversion of the author's meaning (*laughing*). He ! he ! he !—Hem ! you shall hear, my lord—'Lend me your ears.' Shakspeare again. Hem ! 'Tis not unknown to your lordship, and the no less literary world, that the Caledonian University of Aberdeen long since conferred upon me the dignity of LL.D. ; and, as I never beheld that erudite body, I may safely say they dubbed me with a degree from sheer consideration of my celebrity.

"DUB. True.

"PAN. This very day, my lord, at eleven o'clock a.m., the Society of Arts, in consequence, as they were pleased to say, of my merits—(*laughing*)—he ! he ! he !—my merits, my lord—have admitted me an unworthy member ; and I have henceforward the privilege of adding to my name the honourable title of A double S.

"DUB. And I make no doubt, doctor, but you have richly deserved it. I warrant a man doesn't get A double S tacked to his name for nothing."

After various other classical quotations, the doctor commences his lesson:—

"DUB. I'm afraid, doctor, my cakelology will give you a tolerable tight job on't.

"PAN. 'Nil desperandum.' Horace.—Hem ! We'll begin in the old way, my lord. Talk on : when you stumble, I check. Where was your lordship yesterday evening ?

"DUB. At a consort.

"PAN. Umph !—Tête-à-tête with Lady Duberly, I presume ?

"DUB. Tête-à-tête with five hundred people, hearing of music.

"PAN. Oh, I conceive ! your lordship would say a concert. Mark the distinction : a concert, my lord, is an entertainment visited by fashionable lovers of harmony. Now, a consort is a wife little conducive to harmony in the present day, and seldom visited by a man of fashion, unless she happens to be his friend's or his neighbour's.

"DUB. A devil of a difference, indeed ! Between you and I, doctor, a wife is the devil !"

Lord Duberly informs the doctor that his son Dick, who had been bound to an attorney at Castleton, and is just out of his time, has been sent for, and is by this time at the "Blue Boar," Holborn, but still ignorant of his change of fortune. He is as wild and rough as a rock, and the father proposes that the doctor should "take him in hand, and soften him a bit." "Gentlemen of his profession," the doctor replies, "are very difficult to soften," but a promise of £300 a year at once secures his services.

At the "Blue Boar" we are introduced to Zekiel Homespun and his sister Cicely, simple rustics, who have, on their father's death, come to town to seek their fortune. Honest, unsophisticated, and good, their mutual affection and contempt of all that is false and mean make them very pleasing characters. They have come up with Dick Dowlas, the lover of Cicely. Dick, who has

been in London before, now comes in swaggering and singing—a wild, good-natured, scampish fellow, who desires the waiter to take care of the blue and white pocket-handkerchief which contains his wardrobe, with an air as if it were a costly portmanteau, and orders refreshment as if he had no end of guineas. Zekiel and Cicely go away to look after a situation for a maid-servant, which they saw advertised. Dick enters asking—

“Well, where is the man that wants—(*seeing* PANGLOSS). Oh! you are he, I suppose.

“PAN. I *am* the man, young gentleman. ‘Homo sum,’ Terence.—Hem! Sir, the person who now presumes to address you is Peter Pangloss; to whose name, in the College of Aberdeen, is subjoined LL.D., signifying Doctor of Laws; to which has been recently added the distinction of A double S—the Roman initials for a Fellow of the Society of Arts.

“DICK. Sir, I am your most obedient, Richard Dowlas; to whose name, in his tailor’s bill, is subjoined DR., signifying Debtor; to which are added L.S.D.—the Roman initials for pounds, shillings, and pence.”

The doctor, with innumerable classical quotations, hands Dick a letter from his father, stating that he was made “a peer” because old Lord Duberly “died without hair.” Dick is beside himself with joy and wonder, and snubs Pangloss for his familiarity:—

“DICK. Give way! Zounds! I’m wild—mad! You teach me! Pooh! I have been in London before, and know it requires no teaching to be a modern fine gentleman. Why, it all lies in a nutshell. Sport a curricie—walk Bond Street—play at faro—get drunk—dance reels—go to the Opera—cut off your tail—pull on your pantaloons, and there’s a buck of the first fashion in town for you.”

Dick readily gauges the doctor’s calibre, and proposes to turn the tutor into his obsequious servant by doubling his pay. Pangloss accepts the terms.

While he goes out to deposit the Honourable Dick’s wardrobe in Lord Duberly’s chariot, Zekiel and Cicely return to tell him that the latter has got the place, when they learn from Dick his new position. Zekiel shakes Dick heartily by the hand, and Dick assures him they may rely on his protection. Zekiel indignantly resents his changed manner, while Dick’s confusion shows that his heart is still true to his old friendship and love, as he hastily withdraws.

Meantime Cicely has been engaged by Caroline Dormer, the daughter of a deceased merchant, who had failed, and left her in distress. She had been engaged to Henry Morland, the son of the late Lord Duberly, who is supposed to have been drowned. He, however, escaped shipwreck, and returns

to London in great anxiety; for his letters to his father, of whose death he is ignorant, and his mistress, have never been answered. His friend, Stedfast, suggests that his letters may have miscarried, and the report of his death may remain uncontradicted, and proposes to go to his father to prepare him for the appearance of his son. Morland tells him that his father has the manliest virtue and the warmest heart in the world, but that his fine qualities are somewhat concealed by a coldness of manner and a little of the *vieille cour*, while he is dignified and elegant in deportment and language. With this impression, Stedfast calls at the house of Lord Duberly, and the interview with the vulgar but good-natured man whom he supposes to be Morland's father is extremely happily conceived. Astounded at the manner of the noble, so utterly at variance with what he was led to expect, he at length ventures to tell him that his "son, lost as he has been to the world, has newly and unexpectedly entered into life." The other, mistaking the import of his words, imagines he alludes to Dick's change of circumstances, and coolly replies, "Well, and what then?" Stedfast, in disgust at his apathy, adds, "He has this day arrived in town—here—in this very metropolis."

"DUB. Why, what signifies a cock-and-a-bull story about what I know already?"

"STED. Know it! It must, then, be by inspiration. By what supernatural sign have you discovered his arrival?"

"DUB. What sign? Why, d—me! a Blue Boar."

Stedfast expresses his indignation and disgust in no measured language, and departs, leaving the supposed lord under the conviction that he is mad.

Dick all the while is playing the young noble with a vengeance. His mother, with foolish fondness, will not let Pangloss thwart him, nor cram his head with book-learning, but proposes that the philosopher should teach him dancing and to learn to jabber French. Pangloss's indignant scruples are overcome by the promise of an additional £300 a year. Lord Duberly does his part to spoil the youth, and brings him forth in new apparel.

"DUB. Come along, Dick. Here he is again, my lady. Twist, the tailor, happened to come in promiscuously, as I may say, and——"

"PAN. Accidentally, my lord, would be better."

"DUB. Aye, accidentally—with a suit of my Lord Docktail's under his arm; and, as we was in a bit of a rumpus to rig out Dick, why——"

"PAN. Dress—not rig—unless metaphorically."

"DUB. Well, to dress out—why, we—umph! Doctor, don't bother. In short, we popped Dick into 'em; and Twist says they hit to a hair.

"DICK. Yes, they are quite the dandy—arn't they, mother? This is all the go, they say. Cut straight—that's the thing—square waist—wrapt over the knee, and all that. Slouch is the word now, you know.

"LADY D. Exceedingly genteel, I declare! Turn about, Dick; they don't pinch do they?

"DICK. Oh, no; just as if I'd been measured.

"DUB. Pinch! Lord love you, my lady! they sit like a sack. But why don't you stand up? The boy rolls about like a porpus in a storm.

"DICK. That's the fashion, father; that's modern ease. Young Vats, the beau brewer from the Borough, brought it down last Christmas to Castleton. A young fellow is nothing now without the Bond Street roll, a tooth-pick between his teeth, and his knuckles crammed into his coat-pocket. Then away you go, lounging lazily along (*strutting about*). 'Ah, Tom!—What, Will!—Rolling away, you see!—How are you, Jack?—What, my little Dolly!' That's the way, isn't it, mother?"

Dick still loves Cicely, and in a meeting with Zekiel he tells him that, though his rank will not permit him to marry her, they may be "man and wife in everything but the ceremony." Honest Zekiel tells Dick he is a rascal.

"If it be the part of a lord's son to stab his friend to the heart, by robbing his sister of her honesty, much good may it do you wi' your grandeur! But let me tell your grandeur this, Mr. Dowlas: you do know summut (little enow, to be sure) o' the law; and the law of the land do make no difference 'twixt a peer and a ploughman. If you do dare to hurt Cicely, the law shall lay you flat in the first place, and my ploughman's fist will lay you flat in the second—and so my service to ye!"

And so he leaves his former friend, whose heart now upbraids him, and whose love and better principles are struggling for the mastery over his newly-acquired fashionable notions, and are at last victorious. Accordingly, he informs Pangloss of his passion, and insists that he shall aid him.

"PAN. I'm not proud of the post. Take my counsel, and drop the pursuit: 'Refrain--desist—*Desine!*' Terence.—Hem!

"DICK. Why, look ye, doctor: I've done an injury to two worthy souls, and I can't rest till I've made reparation. We are all of us wrong at times, doctor; but a man doubles his ill conduct when he is too proud to make an apology for it.

"PAN. Yet, confessing our faults. Mr. Dowlas —

"DICK. Is only saying, in other words, doctor, 'that we are wiser to-day than we were yesterday.'



The doctor knocks. Cicely opens the door, screams, weeps, and falls into Dick's arms. He makes his peace, and offers her his heart and hand. Then rushing out he embraces Pangloss, and compels the dominie to dance a jig, and finally prevails on his parents to consent to his marriage.

Meanwhile, Morland has discovered that his father is dead, and that another has taken possession of his title and estates. He meets Kenrick, the faithful Irish servant of Caroline, from whom he learns the reverse in her fortunes. Zekiel is raised to sudden prosperity, by finding that an old lottery ticket of his father's had turned up a prize of £20,000. Lord and Lady Duberly now enter, followed by Dick and Dr. Pangloss, to see Cicely. After an abundance of blundering and cross purposes, all is explained, and Lord and Lady Duberly give their assent to their son's marriage. Morland now enters with Kenrick. He runs to Caroline, and clasps her to his heart.

"DUB. Why, zounds! that's the young sucking madman as scared me out of my senses, with the old one, this morning.

"CAR. Oh, Henry! do we once more meet, and after such—— By what miracle have you escaped?

"DUB. Eh?—what?—Henry Morland! Why, zounds! the late Lord Duberly's lost *hair*!

"MOR. Son and heir to that revered and respectable man, be assured, sir. You have done me the favour to be my *locum tenens* in my absence.

"DUB. Od rabbit it! then, old Daniel Dowlas is no longer a lord!

"LADY D. Nor Deborah Dowlas a lady!

"DICK. Nor Dick Dowlas an honourable!

"PAN. Nor Peter Pangloss a tutor!"

Morland promises to make a provision for Dowlas and his wife, while Zekiel proposes to "get into the country and take a bit of a farm."

"The Heir-at-Law" is something more than a satire upon pedantry and ridicule upon vulgarity. It is designed to teach that virtue and honour belong exclusively to no class of life; and that an elevated position but exposes to a stronger light defects which, in an humbler sphere, might escape unnoticed.



JEANIE DEANS.

WHATEVER may be the position that Scott is entitled to hold as a poet—and on this point there are very different opinions—there can be but one judgment as to his pre-eminence as a novelist. Next to Shakespeare he takes his place as the great interpreter of humanity. Like the bard of Avon, the seer of Abbotsford was endowed with instincts that seemed intuitively to open up to him all the hidden springs of the human heart, bordering almost upon inspiration. The universality of his genius comprehended life from the highest to the lowest, from the civilised to the savage, from the acts and thoughts of men to the varying moods and aspects of Nature, in her storm and her calm, in her wild grandeur and her serene beauty. Lord Russell, in his life of Moore, very happily observes of Scott, "Picturesque, interesting, and bard-like as are his narrative poems, the pathos, humour, description, character, and, above all, the marvellous fertility displayed in the novels, show far greater power: a whole region of the territory of imagination is occupied by this extraordinary man, alone and unapproachable." These works, indeed, exercised an influence over the public mind and the public taste which it is impossible to over estimate. They found their way into every

civilised region of the earth, and were translated into every language that had a literature, making themselves part of the thought of the world, so that the fame of Scott may be pronounced to be as wide-spread as it is enduring.

It is, however, in the depiction of Scottish character and Scottish scenery that the strength and beauty of Scott's genius are displayed in their highest excellence. There are to be found his finest descriptions, his most characteristic portraits, his most beautiful creations. We select one from amongst his novels, as eminently illustrating these observations—the “Heart of Midlothian,” and take Jeanie Deans for our heroine.

Though Jeanie Deans may be justly considered as the ideal creation of the author, and a most beautiful illustration of the moral dignity of virtue, though unaided by birth, beauty, or talent, yet is she not without a prototype in real life. We learn from Scott that Helen Walker, the daughter of a small farmer, did really exhibit that strength of character and unswerving love of truth that enabled her to resist the temptation of saving a sister's life by perjury, while she travelled barefoot to London and obtained pardon for the convict. All beyond that, however, has existence only in the imagination of the great novelist. Jeanie and Effie are the daughters—so goes the tale—but by different mothers, of old Davie Deans, a tough, true-blue Presbyterian, who has gone through fiery persecutions only to make him the more stern, fanatical, and uncompromising—one of those religious fanatics of exalted personal piety, whom Scott drew with a power and truth unequalled by any other writer. The old Cameronian dwelt on a farm at St. Leonard's Crag, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and, now a widower, saw his girls growing up to womanhood. Here is the portrait of Jeanie, the elder:—

“She was short, and rather too stoutly made for her size, had grey eyes, light-coloured hair, a round good-humoured face, much tanned with the sun, and her only peculiar charm was an air of inexpressible serenity, which a good conscience, kind feelings, contented temper, and the regular discharge of all her duties, spread over her features.”

Now look on the picture of the younger, Effie, who, under the tender and loving care of her sister, has grown up into a beautiful and blooming girl:—

“Her Grecian-shaped head was profusely rich in waving ringlets of brown hair, which, confined by a blue snood of silk, and shading a laughing Hebe countenance, seemed the picture of health, pleasure, and contentment. Her brown russet short-gown set off a shape which time, perhaps, might be expected to render too robust—the frequent objection to

Scottish beauty—but which, in her present early age, was slender and taper, with that graceful and easy sweep of outline which at once indicates health and beautiful proportion of parts. . . . The traveller stopped his weary horse on the eve of entering the city which was the end of his journey, to gaze at the sylph-like form that tripped by him, with her milk-pail poised on her head, bearing herself so erect, and stepping so light and free under her burden, that it seemed rather an ornament than an encumbrance. The lads of the neighbouring suburb, who held their evening rendezvous for putting the stone, casting the hammer, playing at long bowls, and other athletic exercises, watched the motions of Effie Deans, and contended with each other which should have the good fortune to attract her attention. Even the rigid Presbyterians of her father's persuasion, who held each indulgence of the eye and sense to be a snare at least, if not a crime, were surprised into a moment's delight while gazing on a creature so exquisite."

Jeanie has her admirers—one, the Laird of Dumbiedikes, whose courtship consists in riding daily to St. Leonard's, and sitting bashful, sheepish, and silent, gazing on the object of his affections; the other, Reuben Butler, the son of a neighbouring widow, and the companion of Jeanie from childhood. And the two love each other with a tender love, yet sober and undemonstrative, as becomes their characters; for Reuben is a scholar, and a candidate for the ministry. And Effie—is her heart untouched? Alas! no: the girl is somewhat spoiled by the indulgence of sire and sister, and is self-willed, and lacks the steadiness of her sister; and she has partaken stealthily in the abominations of dances, and lingers out at eventide. A sad story is hers; the whiteness of the "Lily of St. Leonard's" is stained, and she hides her shame and her secret from all—even from her sister. Let us pass over the terrible scene when the officers of justice come with a warrant to arrest the girl on the charge of child-murder; the horror which crushes the father to the earth; the stern indignation with which, after a time, he denounces and disowns the darling of his heart, and thrusts aside those who would comfort him. "Leave me, sirs; leave me. I maun warstle wi' this trial in privacy, and on my knees." One only there is, in the midst of all this affliction, whose force of character and self-sacrificing nature sustain her. And Jeanie crushes down her own feelings of anguish and shame, to support, by an affected calmness, her stern, heart-broken father. The interview of Jeanie with Butler is a touching scene, and conceived entirely in accordance with the character of the girl, and the simplicity and candour of her nature.

"'I am glad you have come in, Mr. Butler,' said she, 'for—for—for I wished to tell ye that all maun be ended between you and me.—it's best for baith our sakes.'

“‘Ended!’ said Butler, in surprise; ‘and for what should it be ended? I grant this is a heavy dispensation, but it lies neither at your door nor mine—it’s an evil of God’s sending, and it must be borne; but it cannot break plighted troth, Jeanie, while they that plighted their word wish to keep it.’

“‘But, Reuben,’ said the young woman, looking at him affectionately, ‘I ken weel that ye think mair of me than yourself; and, Reuben, I can only in requital think mair of your weal than of my ain. Ye are a man of spotless name, bred to God’s ministry, and a’ men say that ye will some day rise high in the kirk, though poverty keep ye down e’en now.’”

In vain the lover pleads. She is firm in her resolve; for she loves him better than she loves herself, and will not bring disgrace to his hearth. “I will bear my load alone—the back is made for the burden.” According to the law of Scotland at the time of the tale, the concealment of the birth of a child who was not forthcoming was presumptive evidence of child-murder against the mother. This presumption might be rebutted by evidence that the mother had made known her state, or had sought for assistance. The trial of Effie approaches; and he who has been the cause of all her misfortune seeks an interview with Jeanie, to induce her to give the necessary testimony. The scene at Muschat’s Cairn is one of deep interest. The man, driven to desperation, threatens Jeanie with death if she will not swear to comply with his request; but not even the fear of death can force her to consent to do what is wrong. “I wad ware the best blood in my body to keep her skaithless,” said Jeanie, weeping in bitter agony; “but I canna change right into wrang, or make that true which is false.” Further pressure is unavailing. “It is not man I fear: the God whose name I must call on to witness the truth of what I say, he will know the falsehood.” “And he will know the motive,” said the stranger. “He will know that you are doing this—not for lucre of gain, but to save the life of the innocent, and prevent the commission of a worse crime than that which the law seeks to avenge.” “He has given us a law,” said Jeanie, “for the lamp of our path; if we stray from it we err against knowledge. I may not do evil, even that good may come out of it.” The perplexity of the truthful girl increases hourly, all the more that her father, believing that her hesitation proceeds from her unwillingness to take an oath in a court of justice, reasons with her in terms which she mistakes to be a suggestion that she should to some extent strain her conscience. “Jeanie,” said he, closing the discussion, “if ye can, wi’ God and gude conscience, speak in favour of this pair unhappy——” here his voice

faltered. "She is your sister in the flesh. Worthless and cast-away as she is, she is the daughter of a saint in heaven, that was a mother to you, Jeanie, in place of your ain. But if ye arena free in conscience to speak for her in the court of judicature, follow your conscience, Jeanie, and let God's will be done." And when he retired to his own chamber, and the door closed upon him, the poor girl said to herself, "Can these be his words that I have heard, or has the Enemy taken his voice and features to give weight unto the counsel which causeth to perish? A sister's life, and a father pointing out how to save it! O God, deliver me! This is a fearfu' temptation!"

A sorer trial awaits her in the meeting with Effie in the Tolbooth.

"Ye are ill, Effie," were the first words Jeanie could utter: "ye are very ill."

"O, what wad I gie to be ten times waur, Jeanie!" was the reply—"what wad I gie to be cauld dead afore the ten o'clock bell the morn! And our father— but I am his bairn nae langer now— O, I hae nae friend left in the world!—O, that I were lying dead at my mother's side, in Newbattle kirkyard!"

"O Effie," said her elder sister, "how could you conceal your situation from me? O woman, had I deserved this at your hand? Had ye spoke but ae word, sorry we might hae been, and shamed we might hae been, but this awfu' dispensation had never come ower us."

"And what gude wad that hae dune?" answered the prisoner. "Na, na, Jeanie, a' was ower when ance I forgot what I promised when I faulded down the leaf of my Bible. Sec," she said, producing the sacred volume, "the book opens aye at the place o' itself."

"Jeanie took her sister's Bible, and found that the fatal mark was made at this impressive text in the Book of Job: 'He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone. And mine hope hath he removed like a tree.'

"Isna that ower true a doctrine?" said the prisoner—"Isna my crown, my honour removed?"

"O, if ye had spoken ae word," again sobbed Jeanie—"if I were free to swear that ye had said but ae word of how it stude wi' ye, they couldna hae touched your life this day."

Then Effie catches at this hope, and draws from Jeanie the fact of the meeting with him who had ruined her, but whom she still loves.

"And he wanted you to say something to yon folks that wad save my young life?"

"He wanted," answered Jeanie, "that I suld be mansworn."

"And you tauld him," said Effie, "that ye wadna hear o' coming between me and the death that I am to die, and me no aughteen year auld yet?"

"I told him," replied Jeanie, who now trembled at the turn which her sister's reflections seemed about to take, "that I daured na swear to an untruth."

“‘And what d’ye ca’ an untruth?’ said Effie, again showing a touch of her former spirit. ‘Ye are muckle to blame, lass, if ye think a mother would, or could, murder her ain bairn—murder!—I wad hae laid down my life just to see a blink o’ its ee!’”

“‘I do believe,’ said Jeanie, ‘that ye are as innocent of sic a purpose as the new-born babe itsell.’”

“‘I am glad ye do me that justice,’ said Effie haughtily; ‘it’s whiles the faut of very good folk like you, Jeanie, that they think a’ the rest of the warld are as bad as the warst temptations can make them.’”

“‘I dinna deserve this frae ye, Effie,’ said her sister, sobbing, and feeling at once the injustice of the reproach, and compassion for the state of mind which dictated it.

“‘O, if it stude wi’ me to save ye wi’ risk of *my* life!’ said Jeanie.

“‘Ay, lass,’ said her sister, ‘that’s lightly said, but no sae lightly credited, frae ane that winna ware a word for me; and if it be a wrang word, ye’ll hae time enough to repent o’t.’”

“‘But that word is a grievous sin, and it’s a deeper offence when it’s a sin wilfully and presumptuously committed.’”

Poor Effie feels bitterly that Jeanie will not make this sacrifice to save her.

“‘Never speak mair o’t,’ said the prisoner. ‘It’s just as weel as it is—and gude-day, sister; ye keep Mr. Ratcliffe waiting on—Ye’ll come back and see me, I reckon, before——’ here she stopped, and became deadly pale.

“‘And are we to part in this way,’ said Jeanie, ‘and you in sic deadly peril? O Effie, look but up, and say what ye wad hae me to do, and I could find in my heart amaisit to say that I wad do’t’”

“‘No, Jeanie,’ replied her sister, after an effort, ‘I am better minded now. At my best, I was never half sae gude as ye were, and what for suld you begin to mak yoursell waur to save me, now that I am no worth saving?’”

And at length, after many a tear and many an embrace, Jeanie retired, and heard the jarring bolts turned upon her whom she loved so dearly.

At last the sorest trial of all is at hand, and Effie stands at the bar of justice arraigned on the capital charge. It would be difficult to find anything, either in the records of judicial proceedings or in the pages of fiction, so intensely interesting, so deeply emotional, as this masterpiece of our great novelist. Even to abbreviate it would far transcend both our limits and our object. Who that has read it can ever forget it? The unhappy and beautiful girl, stupefied, bewildered, and agonised—with her abundant tresses of long fair hair, which she dared not cover with a matron’s cap or confine with a maiden’s snood, falling down and nearly concealing her features—looking wildly around in fear and shame, till at last her pale

check is gradually suffused with a blush that spreads over brow and neck, while she tries with her small hand to cover her face. And there, too, is the wretched father, shrinking away in concealment, and groaning to himself, "Ichabod! my glory is departed!" The indictment is read, and the prisoner is asked, "Guilty, or not guilty?" "Not guilty of my poor bairn's death," said Effie, in an accent corresponding in plaintive softness of tone to the beauty of her features. The address of counsel for the prosecution and for the defence follow, admirably conceived, and the examination of witnesses to prove the charge, and the reading of the prisoner's own statements. At last Jeanie is called into court, from which she has been kept, in attendance.

"The poor prisoner instantly started up, and stretched herself half-way over the bar, towards the side at which her sister was to enter. And when, slowly following the officer, the witness advanced to the foot of the table, Effie, with the whole expression of her countenance altered from that of confused shame and dismay to an eager, imploring, and almost ecstatic earnestness of entreaty, with outstretched hands, hair streaming back, eyes raised eagerly to her sister's face, and glistening through tears, exclaimed, in a tone which went through the heart of all who heard her—'O Jeanie, Jeanie, save me, save me!'

"Jeanie in the meantime had advanced to the bottom of the table, when, unable to resist the impulse of affection, she suddenly extended her hand to her sister. Effie was just within the distance that she could seize it with both hers, press it to her mouth, cover it with kisses, and bathe it in tears, with the fond devotion that a Catholic would pay to a guardian saint descended for his safety; while Jeanie, hiding her own face with her other hand, wept bitterly."

The solemn oath was administered by the judge, with an impressive admonition. After some ordinary questions, the prisoner's counsel proceeded:—

"'Pray, young woman, did you ask your sister any question when you observed her looking unwell? Take courage—speak out.'

"'I asked her,' replied Jeanie, 'what ailed her.'

"'Very well—take your own time—and what was the answer she made?'

"'Jeanie was silent, and looked deadly pale.'

"'Take courage, young woman,' said Fairbrother—'I asked what your sister said ailed her when you inquired.'

"'Nothing,' answered Jeanie, with a faint voice, which was yet heard distinctly in the most distant corner of the court-room.

"'Fairbrother's countenance fell; but he immediately rallied. 'Nothing? True; you mean nothing at first—but when you asked her again, did she not tell you what ailed her?'

"'Alack! alack! she never breathed word to me about it.'



"A deep groan passed through the court. It was echoed by one deeper and more agonised from the unfortunate father. The hope to which unconsciously, and in spite of himself, he had still secretly clung, had now dissolved, and the venerable old man fell forward senseless on the floor of the court-house, with his head at the foot of his terrified daughter. The unfortunate prisoner, with impotent passion, strove with the guards betwixt whom she was placed. 'Let me gang to my father!—I *will* gang to him—I *will* gang to him—he is dead—he is killed—I hae killed him!' she repeated in frenzied tones of grief, which those who heard them did not speedily forget.

"Even in this moment of agony and general confusion, Jeanie did not lose that superiority which a deep and firm mind assures to its possessor under the most trying circumstances.

"'He is my father—he is our father,' she mildly repeated, to those who endeavoured to separate them, as she stooped, shaded aside his grey hairs, and began assiduously to chafe his temples.

"The judge, after repeatedly wiping his eyes, gave directions that they should be conducted into a neighbouring apartment, and carefully attended. The prisoner, as her father was borne from the court, and her sister slowly followed, pursued them with her eyes so earnestly fixed, as if they would have started from their sockets. But when they were no longer visible she seemed to find, in her despairing and deserted state, a courage which she had not yet exhibited.

"'The bitterness of it is now past,' she said, and then boldly addressed the court. 'My lords, if it is your pleasure to gang on wi' this matter, the weariest day will hae its end at last.'"

The evidence is closed, for the case is now hopeless. The speeches of counsel follow; the judge charges the jury, who, after an hour's deliberation, return a verdict of Guilty, with a strong recommendation for mercy. Then follow the impressive address of the judge, and the sentence pronounced by the doomster, and Effie's last touching words, and all is over.

By the bedside of her crushed father Jeanie sits motionless, in the house, of a kind friend, who at last enters. "Is all over?" asked Jeanie; "and is there nae hope for her?" She is told, "Nane, or next to nane." "But can the king gie her mercy?" asks Jeanie earnestly. When she is told he can, the heroic girl at once forms her resolution. She arises, declares she must go home, commends her father to her friend's care, and kneeling by his bedside, she cries, "O father, gie me your blessing. I dare not go till ye bless me. Say but God bless ye, and prosper ye, Jeanie—try but to say that." The old man murmurs a blessing, and she says, "He has blessed mine errand, and it is borne in upon my mind that I shall prosper."

Let us pass briefly over that journey, performed chiefly on foot; the perils

she encountered ; the strange meeting with Effie's betrayer, who she finds is the son of a man of wealth in England, and heir to a baronetcy, and who entreats her, if her own prayers fail, that she shall secure Effie's pardon by his offer to surrender himself to justice as one of the ringleaders in the Porteous murder. Let us, too, pass over her interview with the Duke of Argyle, to whom she brings a letter of recommendation, and who is deeply interested by the heroism, good sense, and noble conduct of the poor Scottish maiden, and promises to use his best endeavours to promote her suit. Argyle procures Jeanie an audience with Queen Caroline at Richmond. No one can read that exquisitely pathetic narrative without emotion. The Queen smiled at the awe-struck manner of the quiet, demure little Scotchwoman, and at her broad northern accent. But Jeanie had a voice low and sweetly toned, and "besought her leddyship to have pity on a poor misguided young creature, in tones so affecting that, like the notes of some of her native songs, provincial vulgarity was lost in pathos."

The Queen asks how she had travelled.

" 'Upon my foot mostly, madam,' was the reply.

" 'What, all that immense way upon foot? How far can you walk in a day?'

" 'Five-and-twenty miles and a bittock,'

" 'I thought I was a good walker,' said the Queen, 'but this shames me sadly.'

" 'May your Ledyship never hae sae weary a heart, that ye canna be sensible of the weariness of the limbs,' said Jeanie.

With what admirable knowledge of the human heart does Scott put the aptest words into the mouth of this poor girl in her final pleading!

" 'But my sister—my puir sister Effie—still lives, though her days and hours are numbered! She still lives, and a word of the King's mouth might restore her to a broken-hearted auld man, that never, in his daily and nightly exercise, forgot to pray that his Majesty might be blessed with a long and a prosperous reign, and that his throne, and the throne of his posterity, might be established in righteousness. O madam, if ever ye kend what it was to sorrow for and with a sinning and a suffering creature, whose mind is sae tossed that she can be neither ca'd fit to live or die, have some compassion on our misery!—Save an honest house from dishonour, and an unhappy girl, not eighteen years of age, from an early and dreadful death! Alas! it is not when we sleep soft and wake merrily ourselves, that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your Ledyship—and

when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours ! —oh, my Leddy, then it isna what we hae dune for ourselfs, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly. And the thoughts that ye hae intervened to spare the puir thing's life will be sweeter in that hour, come when it may, than if a word of your mouth could hang the haill Porteous mob at the tail of ae tow.' ”

The pardon is procured and dispatched to Edinburgh, while Jeanie accompanies the duke's servants, not to Edinburgh, but to the neighbourhood of Roseneath, where she finds her father—now in the employment of the duke—and Butler, to whom he has given a parish and a manse. To our thinking, the great passion and power of this tale terminates here. The spell that held us fascinated, awed, and agitated is removed, and we breathe freely. The rest is highly melodramatic—the marriage of Jeanie and Butler, and that of Staunton and Effie. The meeting between the sisters, first on the shore at evening near Roseneath, and subsequently when Lady Staunton, the great London belle—years' afterwards, when old David Deans is dead—seeks the manse of Mrs. Butler, are finely told and full of true feeling. There is poetic justice, too, in the fate of Sir George Staunton, who meets his death from the hand of that son who he learned had not been murdered and for whom he was at the time seeking. And Effie sought the convent abroad where she had been educated, and lived and died in seclusion.

How can we conclude our paper in more fitting words than those with which the author concludes his delightful romance ?

“ READER,—This tale will not be told in vain if it shall be found to illustrate the great truth that guilt, though it may attain temporal splendour, can never confer real happiness ; that the evil consequences of our crimes long survive their commission, and, like the ghosts of the murdered, for ever haunt the steps of the malefactor ; and that the paths of virtue, though seldom those of worldly greatness, are always those of pleasantness and peace.”





“THE ANCIENT MARINER.”

OUR literature contains nothing to surpass, in its own way, Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Tales of the wild and wonderful we have in abundance, but in none of them, that we remember, is "the vision and faculty divine," as Coleridge himself phrases poetry, so powerfully present. This faculty in him, as in De Quincy and in Poe, by nature deeply implanted, was preternaturally stimulated till it became diseased. And in each of them we have, alas! not far to look for the cause. Imagine it, restless and unregulated, wasting itself in a perpetual strain, till, weakened with a spiritual hunger, it sought for a temporary re-invigoration in the stimulant of opium or alcohol. In this poem we have all those terrors, purely spiritual, which, though our soberer reason rejects, still appeal to a deeper and more mysterious sense, anterior even to reason itself, and whose origin is hidden in the unsearchable depths of our being. Superstition, the world calls these emotions; but one who thought much tells us, with a deeper wisdom, "They are transcripts—types; the archetypes are in us eternal." Our spirit-life, in dreams and visions of sleep, beautifully termed

by Menander "the lesser mysteries of death,"* gets a momentary glimpse into regions where philosophy finds no footing; as when the clouds of night open for an instant to let in light from star-worlds immeasurably distant, closing again to leave us dark as before. Let us now to our tale.

It chanced upon a day that three guests were on their way to a wedding feast, when one of them was arrested by a strange, haggard, unearthly-looking form, "long and lank and brown, as is the ribbed sea-sand," with long grey beard and glittering eye, who lays hold of him with skinny hand, and fixes him with that glittering eye, spell-bound. In vain the sounds of revelry from the bridegroom's open doors come floating on the air; in vain he demands to be released, and cries—

"Hold off! unhand me, greybeard loon!"

At the first word that this Ancient Mariner utters, he is motionless and helpless as a child, and sitting down on a stone, he listens to the ghastly tale which, with a strange power of speech, this mysterious being is compelled to disclose, in the agony of his burning heart. Then he tells how a goodly ship left the harbour, cheered by those ashore, and with fair wind and weather sped merrily southward, till each familiar object disappeared, one by one—the kirk, the hill, and the lighthouse-top—till she was in the waste of lone waters. And when they had reached the line, lo! a storm-blast, tyrannous and strong, came from the north and struck the ship, and chased them towards the south pole.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice-mast-high came floating by,
As green as emerald.

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen;
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like voices in a swoond."

* *Τηνος, τὰ μικρὰ τοῦ θανάτου μυστήρια.

At length through the dismal snow-fog came a great sea-bird, and they hailed it in God's name, as if it had been a Christian soul. It was one of those great wandering storm-birds which arrest the notice of the voyager in the Southern Ocean. Its vast extent of wing, its graceful evolutions, its force displayed even in the tempest, when the wind lashes the waves into foam, rising and falling as if some concealed power guided its motions without any exertion of muscular energy, make the albatross an object of wonder and admiration, as she sails round the vessel far away at sea, swooping down to catch the offal thrown overboard. A bird of good omen was that albatross, for a south wind sprung up, and as the vessel retraced her way northward the bird followed—

“And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo.

“In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine.”

Then the face of the mariner was as the face of one fiend-plagued, and his strange look terrified the listener, who exclaimed “God save thee, ancient mariner ! why look'st thou so ?”

Sad and brief was the reply, “With my cross-bow I shot the albatross.”

A hellish thing had he done, as his heart told him, in killing that sweet bird ; and his mates reviled him while they sailed on through the mists ; but when the fog cleared away, and they sped along with a fair breeze into the Pacific Ocean—“the first that ever burst into that silent sea”—then his mates reviled him no more, but said he had done well in killing the bird that brought the fog and mist, and so they shared his sin.

Suddenly came a great calm, and the sails dropped idly down, and there was not a sound to break the silence of the sea, save the voices of the men as they spoke to each other. And the very deep rotted, and slimy things crawled on the slimy sea. And in their agony men went well-nigh mad, and some said they had dreamed that a spirit had followed them from the land of mist and snow to plague them. Then their tongues were withered with drought, so that they could not speak ; but they cast evil looks on him who had killed the albatross,

and they hung the dead bird about his neck instead of the cross. At length, when every throat was parched and every eye was glazed, through that weary, weary time, the mariner beheld a little speck in the west, and as it grew and neared he saw it was a ship. Then he bit his arm and sucked the blood, and so found voice to cry "A sail!" The black, baked lips and unslaked throats of his comrades could utter no sound, but they grinned for joy, and drew in their breath as if they were drinking. Without breeze or tide the strange vessel bore down upon them, and drove suddenly between them and the broad, bright sun, just as his rim was touching the western wave. A marvellous picture, intensely vivid, follows—one that might tax to its utmost the genius of Danby.

"And straight the sun was flecked with bars —
Heaven's mother send us grace! —
As if through a dungeon-gate he peered
With broad and burning face."

And her sails glance in the sun like restless gossamers.

"Are those her ribs through which the sun
Did peer as through a grate?
And is that woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? And are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?"

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold;
Her skin was as white as leprosy.
The nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thickens man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre bark."

Through the thick night, when the stars were dim, they watched in terror; but when the moon arose, one by one, without groan or sigh, each of that

crew turned his face with a ghastly pang upon their guilty mate, and cursing him with his eye, dropped down dead. And he was left alone on that wide sea, with the dead around him, and the curse still in their eyes.

In the moonlight, that lonely man sees the water-snakes moving in tracks of shining white; and as they rear themselves, the elfish light falls from them in hoary flakes; and as they swim and play about, every track is a flash of golden fire. While he watches those creatures in their beauty, a spring of love gushes from his heart: he blesses them, and the spell is dissolved.

“The self-same moment I could pray,
And from my neck so free
The albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.”

He falls into a gentle sleep, and awakes refreshed. Next comes a roaring wind, shaking with its sound the sails till they sigh like sedge, and the rain pours down from the black thunder-cloud, and the lightning flashes. That wind never touches the ship, but yet she moves on; and with a groan the dead men arise, and the ghastly crew work the ship, each in his wonted place.

“The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me.”

Yet was it not the souls of the dead men that animated their bodies, but a troop of blessed spirits, for at dawn they clustered round the mast and filled the air with angelic songs; and so the ship sailed on till noon, when she stopped suddenly, for the spell was again upon her of that Spirit of the South, who still demanded vengeance for the killing of the albatross. The vessel begins to move backwards and forwards, with a short uneasy motion.

“Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.”

While in this trance the mariner hears a dialogue between two spirits in the air, from which he learns that the Polar Spirit, who loved the albatross,



has required, and will still require, penance to be inflicted on him who slew the bird. Then the Polar Spirit returns southward; the vessel drives northward faster than human life could endure. When he awakes the ship sails slowly on in the calm moonlight, the dead men standing together and fixing their stony eyes on him, and the pang and the curse with which they died has not passed away; nor can he turn away his eyes, or pray; till at length the spell is snapped, and he turns his eyes on the green ocean—

"Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head,
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

Charles Lamb, in one of his charming essays, quotes this passage in illustration of those supernatural terrors which affect us, apart from all idea of the fear of any bodily injury. "All the cruel, tormenting, defined devils in Dante—tearing, mangling, choking, stifling, scorching demons—are they one half so fearful to the spirit of a man, as the simple idea of a spirit unembodied following him?"

After that a wind breathes on the mariner, raising his hair and fanning his cheek, till he sees once more the dear familiar objects of his own land—the lighthouse-top, the hill, and the kirk. A beautiful picture succeeds of a tranquil moonlight in the bay, and, lo!—

"Full many shapes that shadows were
In crimson colours came."

These were the angelic spirits leaving the dead bodies, each seraph-man standing in light on every corse.

"This seraph-band each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light.

"This seraph-band each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart
No voice; but, oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart."

A dash of oars is heard—it is the pilot-boat, with the pilot, his boy, and a holy hermit. They have been led by the spirit-lights, which they took for signals; but when they are near the ship the lights are gone—no voice answers to their cheer; and as they come alongside, the vessel sinks down like lead, with a terrible sound. The mariner springs into the pilot-boat and takes the oars; the pilot with a shriek falls down in a fit, and the boy goes mad from that hour. When they come to land the mariner entreats the hermit to shrive him, and relates his horrible tale. Then is imposed on him the life penance of telling his tale, at certain seasons, to some one, whom when he sees, he at once knows will be constrained to listen. Thus the ghastly narrative ends, but not without its beautiful moral—that we should love and reverence all things which God made and revered. This precept was broken when the mariner shot, as an idle pastime, the stately bird that circled round the ship, and followed it as a good spirit. And the first remission of agony and sign of returning mercy is given the sufferer, when he beholds the lovely, happy creatures disporting in the ocean, and blesses them. This duty is thus solemnly inculcated by the Ancient Mariner, as he releases his spell-bound listener:—

“ Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding guest :
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

“ He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.’





“GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.”

WE are not prepared to endorse the estimate of Dr. Moir when he pronounced “Gertrude of Wyoming” the greatest effort of Campbell’s genius ; nor has the world done so. As a whole, “The Pleasures of Hope” will ever be ranked before it, while “Ye Mariners of England” and “The Battle of the Baltic” for vigour, “Hohenlinden” and “Lord Ullin’s Daughter” for pathos, and “The Last Man” for sublimity, all impress the reader with a higher opinion of his genius. Yet, had Campbell never written anything except this charming tale, he would have taken no low place among the British poets. The music of its rhythm—the roll of the fine, full Spenserian stanzas successfully essayed by Thomson in his “Castle of Indolence,” and wrought to perfection by Byron in “Childe Harold”—the polish of its language (though sometimes elaborated beyond simplicity), the depths of its pathos, the rich and tender beauty of its descriptions, will ever secure for this poem (despite of defects on which we care not to dwell) enthusiastic readers amongst the young and the old. The very name of Wyoming awakens the saddest memories in every reader of the history of the war of American independence. The beautiful

valley on the banks of the Susquehanna was, in 1788, the scene of one of the most horrible massacres committed during the war. One who visited this valley in 1857, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, carefully collected all the traditions of the place, and examined its records, and afterwards published a most interesting narrative of the massacre in "A Visit to the Valley of Wyoming," which, it is to be regretted, is now out of print. "Woodland scenery," he says, "more exquisitely beautiful I never beheld, except, perhaps, some portions of Killarney. From a long strip of table-land, level as a bowling-green, and probably better than a mile in width, the ground rose at each side. The plain was studded with rich corn-fields and meadows, thickly interspersed with groves of trees. Peeping through the orchard groves, and marked by surrounding wood of taller and heavier kind, could be discerned the snow-white speck which scarcely required the attendant wreath of blue smoke curling upwards, to proclaim a Wyoming farmhouse. On the left, or east side, divided from the flats by an undulating ridge of ground, flowed the river, behind which hill after hill rose and stretched away, wooded to the summit. On the right, or west side, of the level land the ground rose gradually, and, for a mile or two up the slope, was apparently in occupation. From thence upward, rising somewhat more quickly, the mountains, covered with forest and varied in outline, reached into distance which the eye could not follow." The native Indians who parted with this lovely vale, had ever a longing to regain it; for, they said, "though they should wander for ever in the track of the setting sun, another Wyoming they should never find." Accordingly they made more than one attempt to repossess themselves of it, but were repulsed. The hour of their vengeance was, however, at hand. After the war broke out, the British, aided by their Indian allies, meditated an attack on Wyoming, whence nearly the whole effective male population had been drafted into the Colonial armies, few but old men, women, and children being left. The knowledge of the danger reached the army, and when Washington could not permit the Wyoming regiments to return, many of the officers resigned, and sought their beloved valley, to aid in defending it. By degrees the enemy surrounded the valley, and drew their lines nearer and nearer, till the war-whoop of the Six Nations was heard by the scouts. In this emergency, Colonel Zebulon Butler took the command of such forces as they could muster in their defence, the women making powder.

Into the details of the struggle we shall not enter. Fort after fort was taken;

after desperate resistance, by Colonel John Buller, who led the British forces, and the Amazonian Indian "Queen Esther," and the Mohawk chief, Gi-en-guah-toh, better known in history as Brandt, half-Indian by blood. At last the small brave band went forth on the 3rd of July to give battle to their enemies rather than surrender at discretion, not a fifth of the number being between the ages of eighteen and fifty years. For half an hour the battle raged hotly, and the Wyomingers, animated with desperate courage, pressed the English line, till it gave way; but superior strength and numbers at last began to tell against the patriot band. They wavered, they gave way, they fled, and an utter rout and slaughter ensued. The last fort was now summoned to surrender, and terms being agreed upon, the Wyomingers were allowed to leave the place, taking with them what property remained. The horrors of their flight are scarcely credible. Old men and women tottering along, butchered, or taken captives by the Indians; mothers with infants on the breast; fathers with little ones in their arms. "Several perished of exhaustion on the way, and there were instances where births, as well as deaths, marked the track of the flight. Too late, the succours from the state arrived—too late to save, but not too late to exact a fearful vengeance.

It is this sad episode in the American war that Campbell has taken for his tale. The tragic incidents which we have briefly noticed are not, however, to be found in the poem, and are but sparingly alluded to. The story is a simple one. In this delightful valley, which is described in the opening stanzas with an exquisitely rich and dreamy beauty, dwells "one venerable man, beloved of all," Albert, the judge and chief of the district. And smiling in his house, or blessing his noonday walk, was his only child.

"The rose of England bloomed on Gertrude's cheek
What though these shades had seen her birth, her sire
A Briton's independence taught to seek
Far western worlds; and there his household fire
The light of social love did long inspire,
And many a halcyon day he lived to see
Unbroken but by one misfortune dire,
When fate had reft his mutual heart—but she
Was gone—and Gertrude climbed a widow'd father's knee."

Upon a summer day, Albert and his daughter, now nine years old, saw an

Indian leave his canoe and approach them rapidly, with "red wild feathers on his brow." He conducted a boy

"Of Christian vesture, and complexion bright,
Led by his dusky guide, like morning brought by night."

The Oneyda warrior places his hand on the boy's head, and with a salutation of peace, commends him to the love of Albert. He tells how his tribe, in a hunting expedition upon the Michigan with the Hurons, had been treacherously surprised by these false friends; how, after they had overcome them, they found a Christian mother and her child bound to a tree, after the husband and father had been slaughtered; and the poor widow, as "she was journeying to the land of souls," prayed them to take the child to Albert, who would remember the ring she gave, and would convey the orphan to England. Albert receives the son of his dear friend, recalling with emotion the memory of his mother when she was such as Gertrude. The tenderness which he exhibits as he strains the boy to his bosom is well contrasted with the stoical deportment of the Oneyda chief.

"As monumental bronze unchanged his look;
A soul that pity touched but never shook;
Trained, from his tree-rocked cradle to his bier,
The fierce extreme of good and ill to brook
Impassive—fearing but the shame of fear:
A stoic of the woods—a man without a tear."

Yet ere he departs Outalissi chants his farewell song to the little one in the figurative language of the Indians. He bids him, if he should meet the spirit of his mother in his dreams, to tell how the white man had "plucked the thorns of sorrow from his feet," and invites him, should affliction come upon him, to return to his Indian deliverer to be his adopted son. Outalissi flings his wolfskin on his back, laces his mocassins, and departs.

Here for three years, amid the sweet influences of clime and scenery, described with all the charm of poetic beauty, the children grow up together. Then Henry Waldegrave is sent for by his relatives in England, and departs; and Gertrude, "enthusiast of the woods," grows up into the bloom of beautiful womanhood, tending her father with a daughter's love, and living a sweet calm

life in the solitudes of the beautiful valley. It happened on a day, as Gertrude was musing in the green wood, listening to

"The stock-dove plaining through its gloom profound,
Or winglet of the fairy humming-bird,
Like atoms of the rainbow fluttering round,"

that a stranger with bronzed cheek, and clad in Spanish costume, approached her unawares, leading his horse by the bridle rein. He asks where Albert lives; she points to the direction where the house stands, and the young man goes. On her return home, Gertrude finds him in conversation with her father. He tells of his travels through civilised Europe and the wild regions of America

"Pleased with his guest, the good man still would ply
Each earnest question, and his converse court;
But Gertrude, as she eyed him, knew not why
A strange and troubling wonder stopt her short."

Then Albert questions him if he chanced to have ever heard of Henry Waldegrave, whose story he relates, and tells how sorely the boy of twelve grieved when parting from himself, and still more from Gertrude.

"His face the wanderer hid—but could not hide
A tear, a smile, upon his cheek that dwell;
'And speak, mysterious stranger!' Gertrude cried.
'It is!—it is! I knew—I knew him well;
'Tis Waldegrave's self, of Waldegrave come to tell!
A burst of joy the father's lip declare!
But Gertrude speechless on his bosom fell;
At once his open arms embraced the pair:
Was never group more blest in this wide world of care."

Waldegrave tells how he had come back to seek them, and to live with them if they were still living, or, if dead, to weep over their tombs, and pass away.

Henry's wooing of Gertrude is told with exquisite pathos. They are married, and life becomes to them a dream of unalloyed happiness. But they are rudely awakened by the roar of that storm—

"When Transatlantic Liberty arose,
 Not in the sunshine and the smile of heaven;
 But wrapt in whirlwinds, and begirt with woes,
 Amidst the strife of fratricidal foes."

Already is the foe beleaguering the peaceful vale of Wyoming. Henry is summoned to the battle. Gertrude entreats him to fly to England, but he will not forsake the holy cause of freedom. It is night:—

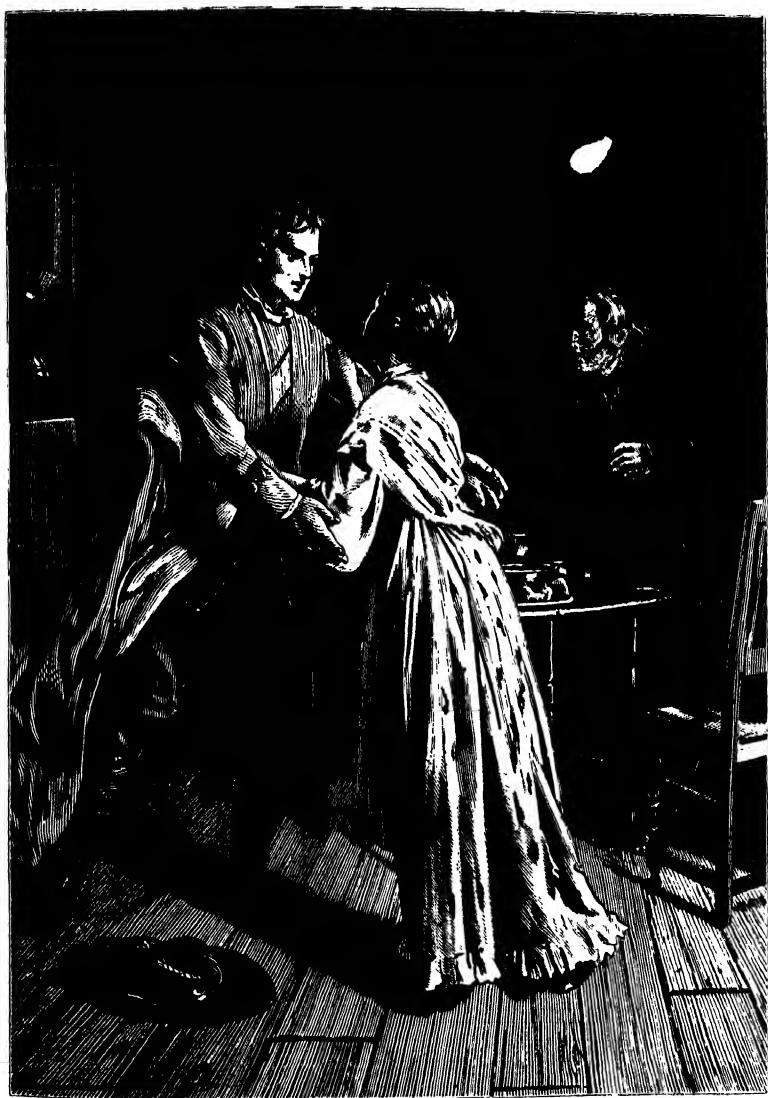
"Abrupt and loud, a summons shook their gate;
 And, heedless of the dog's obstreperous bark,
 A form had rushed amidst them from the dark,
 And spread his arms—and fell upon the floor:
 Of aged strength his limbs retained the mark;
 But desolate he looked, and famished, poor
 As ever shipwrecked wretch lone left on desert shore."

This is Outalissi. He is recognised and clasped in Henry's arms. Then he tells them that "accursed Brandt" has slaughtered his whole tribe, of which he alone escaped, and that the enemy is at hand. While he speaks the roar of the exploding bombshells reverberates through heaven.

"And sounds that mingled laugh, and shout, and scream,
 To freeze the blood in one discordant jar,
 Rung to the pealing thunderbolts of war."

The hills around blaze with the fires of the assailants. Henry accoutres himself hastily, embraces his wife, and goes to the battle. With a pardonable violation of historical truth, the poet now brings the American troops to the rescue. While the battle rages the people of the valley seek safety in a fort. Henry rejoins Gertrude, and she feels safe within his arms. An Indian has stolen upon them and fires. Albert falls bleeding into Gertrude's arms and dies, while she swoons and bleeds.

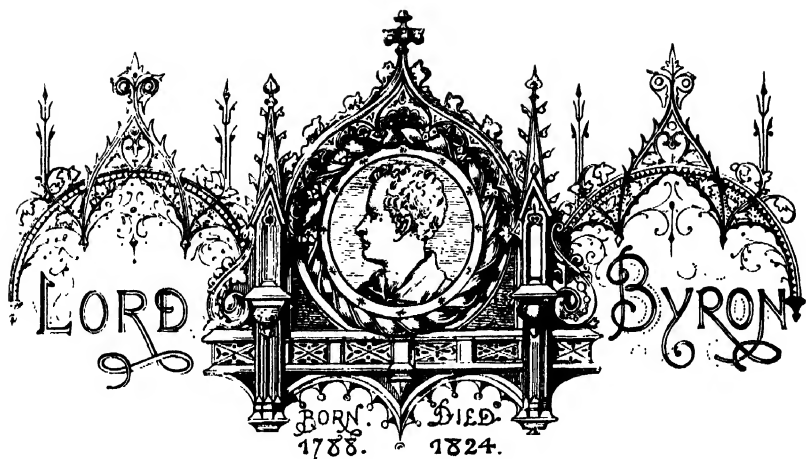
"Say, burst they, borrowed from her father's wound,
 These drops?—O God! the life-blood is her own!
 And faltering, on her Waldegrave's bosom thrown;
 'Weep not, O Love!' she cries, 'to see me bleed;
 Thee, Gertrude's sad survivor, thee alone
 Heaven's peace commiserate; for scarce I heed,
 These wounds; yet thee to leave is death, is death indeed!



" ' Clasp me a little longer on the brink
Of fate ! while I can feel thy dear caress ;
And when this heart hath ceased to beat, oh ! think,
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess,
That thou hast been to me all tenderness,
And friend to more than human friendship just.
Oh ! by that retrospect of happiness,
And by the hopes of an immortal trust,
God shall assuage thy pangs—when I am laid in dust ! "

The poem concludes with the mute grief of Waldegrave, who flings himself to the earth in his agony. Outalissi casts his mantle over him, and breaks out in one of the wild death-songs of his race, forming a sublime close to this charming poem.





H A I D É E.

It must ever be a subject of regret that Byron's poem, "Don Juan," is to so large a portion of readers a sealed book. Full of a mocking scepticism, wantonly outraging morality, and constantly violating good taste, it displays a hatred of cant and hypocrisy, and lashes the false in whatever phase of life it may appear—in politics, morals, or religion—with a merciless scourge. Besides, there are throughout it as fine bursts of poetic feeling, as high elevation of thought, and as affluent beauties of imagery and diction as are to be found in any of the author's compositions. One of his apologists has asserted that this poem, if rightly read, is not immoral; because, whatever its offences against religion and decency, it is a crusade against all that is base and false in human nature. But this plea is valueless to the instincts of our better nature, and the unsophisticated teachings of our common sense. On the same grounds may the writings of Rabelais, of Voltaire, of Rousseau, and of Sterne be accounted moral. The exhibition of vice and sin may be moral. It is so if the moralist, in the discharge of a stern and holy duty, exposes the social sores that he may heal them; if he shows immorality in its loathsomeness, that deters while it disgusts. But he who exhibits the sins

and frailties of our nature so as often to extenuate them, and sometimes even to make them alluring, is no more like a moralist than he who spreads the infection of the plague to destroy is like him who vaccinates to save.

Still, from this brilliant satirical and scoffing poem we may detach many a passage pure and beautiful, many an episode tender and romantic—gems that glitter all the more brightly from the base metal in which they are set—sunbeams clear and unsullied as the heavens from which they come, untainted and undimmed by the corruption upon which they fall. One of these we select—a romance of true love—as pathetic in its incidents, as passionate in its deep emotions, as rich in its poetic colouring as anything we know of—the lover-tale of the Greek island maiden, Haidée. “Over this charming creature,” Campbell truly observes, “the poet has thrown a beauty and a fascination which were never, we think, surpassed.” It was after that shipwreck, the details of which are given with such a terrible and picturesque reality in the second canto, that Don Juan, at fall of day—faint, emaciated, and stark, the only survivor of the crew—swam to the beach of a wild and lonely shore. A wave washed him up close to the entrance of a cliff-worn cave. Staggeringly and slowly he arose, but sank again upon bleeding knee and quivering hand. He gazed around, and his brain swam dizzily—his senses failed him, and he fell on his side. How long he lay in this trance, he knew not; but at last he feels life throbbing back painfully through pulse, and vein, and limb; and opening his eyes he sees “a lovely female face of seventeen.”

“’Twas bending close o’er his, and the small mouth
Seem’d almost prying into his for breath;
And, chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recall’d his answering spirits back from death.”

The girl poured a cordial into his mouth, and flung a mantle round his limbs, and then raised his head till she pillowed it on her own warm cheek—

“And watched with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom—and hers too.”

An attendant girl aids her to lift Juan into the cave, and in the light of the fire which they kindle the beautiful girl stands disclosed to his gaze.

" Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
 That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair,
 Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were roll'd
 In braids behind ; and though her stature were
 Even of the highest for a female mould,
 They nearly reach'd her heel ; and in her air
 There was a something which bespoke command,
 As one who was a lady in the land.

" Her hair, I said, was auburn ; but her eyes
 Were black as death, their lashes the same hue,
 Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
 Deepest attraction ; for when to the view
 Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
 Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew :
 'Tis as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
 And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

" Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
 Like twilight, rosy still with the set sun ;
 Short upper lip——"

And who was that lovely girl that ministered to him ? The motherless daughter of old Lambro, a Greek pirate and smuggler—a grand character in his own way, who made himself a home on a wild small island of the Cyclades, and filled it with the spoils of his ill-gotten wealth ; and there he lived with his daughter Haidée, "the greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles," who had already refused the hand of many a suitor. She it was who, walking on the beach at sunset, with her maid Zoe, had found Juan, and succoured him. They made him a bed of furs, and Haidée flung a rich sable pelisse over him, and then left him. Dreamless was the sleep of the weary Juan—not so that of Haidée, for the image of the beautiful youth was present with her in dreams. She arose with the sun and hied with Zoe to the cave, where they found Juan still sleeping.

" And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
 Hush'd as the babe upon its mother's breast."

At length he wakes, and his wants are ministered to : he is fed and supplied with clothes. Then the fair girl tries to make him understand her speech ; but he knows not a word, and they have recourse to signs and looks

to make themselves intelligible one to the other. Day by day the beautiful instructress visits her willing pupil, who daily recovers his strength and freshness. Pleasant was the schooling, and Juan by degrees learned enough of the Romaic of the girl to converse with her.

“And thus a moon roll’d on, and fair Haidée
Paid daily visits to her boy, and took
Such plentiful precautions, that still he
Remain’d unknown within his craggy nook.
At last her father’s prows put out to sea.”

The old man’s absence gave greater freedom, and the lovers—for they were lovers though they scarcely knew it—walked by the shore at sunset.

A tranquil, beautiful evening. All was quiet in earth and air and sea. No wave rolled in upon the sands to ruffle them. No sound was heard save the sea-bird’s cry or dolphin’s leap.

“It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill;
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hush’d, and dim, and still;
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

“And thus they wander’d forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden’d sand;
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work’d by the storms, yet work’d as it were plann’d,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn’d to rest; and, each clasp’d by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight’s purple charm.

“They look’d up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the waves splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other’s dark eyes darting light
Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss.”

Reader, do you remember that exquisite passage in the "Inferno" of Dante, so indescribably mournful and pathetic, wherein is told the fall of Francesca and Paolo of Rimini as they sat alone ?—

"Soli cravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.
 Per piu fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
 Quella lettura e scolorocci ill viso :
 Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse,
 Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
 Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
 Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
 La bocca mi bacio tutto tremante."

Alas! alas! for those so young and so beautiful. A fine burst of passionate remonstrance in the "Sentimental Journey" rises to our memory :—
 "Ye whose clay-cold heads and lukewarm hearts can argue down or mask your passions, tell me what trespass is it that man should have them? or how his spirit stands answerable to the Father of Spirits but for his conduct under them? If Nature has so wove her web of kindness that some threads of love and desire are entangled with the piece, must the whole web be rent in drawing them out. 'Whip me such stoics, Great Governor of Nature!' said I to myself. 'Wherever thy providence shall place me for the trials of my virtue—whatever is my danger—whatever is my situation—let me feel the movements which rise out of it, and which belong to me as a man; and if I govern them as a good one, I will trust the issues to thy justice; for thou hast made us, and not we ourselves.'" Ah! truly yes. It is no trespass to have the passions which God has given us; but as truly are we responsible for our conduct under them. And He only who has made us, and knows whercof we are made, may judge the temptation, and pardon the fall.

And so these two lived on and loved their brief days of happiness, soon to end. With what a wailing pathos does Byron prelude their coming sorrow!

"Oh, Love! what is it, in this world of ours,
 Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah! why
 With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
 And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
 As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
 And place them on their breast, but place to die—
 Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
 Are laid within our bosom—but to perish."

Old Lambro has had rather a long cruise of piratical adventures—so long that his people concluded he had met his fate. Haidée presides in his place, with Juan to share it. At last the old pirate returned, and as he stood on a hill, “he saw his white walls shining in the sun.” And on approaching nearer he hears the sound of music and laughter; then he sees a troop of domestics dancing the Pyrrhic dance, and a group tripping to the choral chant. Revellers and feasters are there also, drinking from flasks the Samian and Chian wine, and the cool draughts of sherbet. Strangely surprised is the old man at all he sees and hears. But he does not fly into a passion. Not he: he is the coolest and most methodical of men. So he approaches one of the guests, who is somewhat overcome with liquor, taps him on the shoulder, and politely asks what all this jollity might mean. The worthy presents the querist with a cup of wine over his shoulder, and says, “Talking is dry. I have no time to spare.” Another tells him, “Our old master’s dead.” Then his brow lowers, and in the calmness of concentrated anger he passes on and enters his house by a private way. Meantime his daughter and her young lover are sitting “at wassail in their beauty and their pride.” A wonderful description is that of this Oriental repast, and the gorgeous wealth of this semi-barbaric palace—gold and silver, and ivory and ebony—rich carpets, hangings of tapestry, velvet, and silk; but the poet reserved all the powers of his genius, all the art of his pencil, all the finest colours of his palette to portray Haidée. We give a few stanzas—

“ Her hair’s long auburn waves down to her heel
 Flow’d like an Alpine torrent, which the sun
 Dyes with his morning light, and would conceal
 Her person if allow’d at large to run;
 And still they seem resentfully to feel
 The silken fillet’s curb, and sought to shun
 Their bonds whene’er some Zephyr, caught, began
 To offer his young pinion as her fan.

“ Round her she made an atmosphere of life.
 The very air seem’d lighter from her eyes—
 They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
 With all we can imagine of the skies,
 And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
 Too pure even for the purest human ties;
 Her overpowering presence made you feel
 It would not be idolatry to kneel.

" Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
 (It is the country's custom), but in vain ;
 For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
 The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
 And in their native beauty stood avenged.
 Her nails were touch'd with henna ; but again
 The power of art was turn'd to nothing, for
 They could not look more rosy than before."

And as the young sovereign of the isle, with him whom she has called to share her sovereignty with all a husband's rights, sit at their repast, a poet sings to them a song—a lyric, one of the sweetest and grandest that minstrel ever poured from his heart or chanted to the ringing lyre-strings. Instinct with the passion that stirred Tyrtæus, the lofty scorn and bitterness of Alcæus, the bard in that noble chant, " The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece !" recounts the glories of his country in the days of old, and the degeneracy of his children, spiritless and fettered, bringing the blush to his face and the tear to his eye. We need not quote it, if we might. Every reader is familiar with that song by which Byron sought to arouse the dormant energies of the modern Greeks. Let us to our tale. The feast is over, the song is hushed : all are gone : the rosy flood of twilight is in the sky, and the star of Hesperus has risen on the world. And they, the lovers, united with as true a faith as if wedlock had tied the bond, sat gazing on the night, then—

" Even as they gazed a sudden tremor came,
 And swept, as 'twere, across their hearts' delight,
 Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
 When one is shook in sound, and one in sight ;
 And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,
 And call'd from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
 While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.
 " That large black prophet-eye seem'd to dilate,
 And follow far the disappearing sun,
 As if their last day of a happy date,
 With his broad, bright, and dropping orb, were gone.
 Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate :
 He felt a grief ; but knowing cause for none,
 His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
 For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse."

Her soul is too truly prophetic of evil to come. Even in the night she is troubled in her dreams, and sees Juan lifeless at her feet, and wakes to find her father standing over her. Vainly the shrieking girl clings to him in love and terror—in prayers and passionate kisses—vainly Juan resists. Lambro demands his sword, and coolly cocks his pistol with a click. Then the woman, pale and stern, stands between the men, and drawing herself up to her full height, confronts her father.

“He gazed on her, and she on him : ’twas strange
 How like they look’d !—the expression was the same ;
 Serenely savage, with a little change
 In the large dark eye’s mutual darted flame :
 For she, too, was as one who could avenge
 If cause should be—a lioness, though tame :
 Her father’s blood before her father’s face
 Boil’d up, and proved her truly of his race.”

What a grand picture ! The father gazes on her a moment, as if he would look through her : tender thoughts are passing through his heart : he replaces his weapon—speaks a few words ordering Juan to disarm at the peril of his life—then to the call of his whistle armed men rush in—with a sudden movement he seizes Haidée, while Juan, after a bloody and desperate struggle, is captured, borne away, and placed on board a galliot. Then Haidée, with one convulsive groan, fell heavily on the arm of her father.

“A vein had burst, and her sweet lips’ pure dyes
 Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o’er ;
 And her head droop’d, as when the lily lies
 O’ercharged with rain.”

For days she lay in that state between life and death, pulseless but beautiful. She woke at length, rather like one from death than from sleep. A heavy ache lay at her heart, she knew not why. Handmaids tend her, her father watches her—she heeds them not—she lies gentle, but without memory. At last some one thought of music, and a harper strikes his harp, and sings a long, low island song ; then she turns to the wall, and her thin wan fingers beat time against it. The theme is changed, and he sings of love ; then the memory of all that has been flashes on her like a dream, and she weeps. Short is the

relief of that gush of sorrow. She rises with a maddened brain, and flies in her frenzy at all whom she meets. One face only she will never look on—the face of her father. Food and sleep she refuses, and so

“Twelve days and nights she wither’d thus : at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her past ;
And they who watch’d her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o’er her eyes—the beautiful, the black.”

They laid her to sleep by the sea-shore that she loved, where sorrow or shame may never more light on her.

“That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants pass’d away,
None but her own and father’s grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay :
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was : no dirge, except the hollow sea’s,
Mourns o’er the beauty of the Cyclades.

“But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o’er her name ; and many an islander
With her sire’s story makes the night less long.
Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her :
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong.
A heavy price must all pay who thus err.”

Let us, as we pass from this most pathetic tale, take to our hearts the sentiment with which it closes. How just are the reflections on this love-story of one who did not withhold strong censure upon Byron in his graver offences against propriety. “If the loves of Juan and Haidée,” says Campbell, “are not pure and innocent, and dictated with sufficient delicacy and propriety, the tender passion may as well be struck at once out of the list of the poet’s themes. We must shut our eyes and harden our hearts against the master-passion of our existence ; and, becoming mere creatures of hypocrisy and form, charge even Milton himself with folly.”



POMPEII--NYDIA.

MORE than thirty years ago Mr. Bulwer, now Lord Lytton, gave to the world his "Last Days of Pompeii." It was then acknowledged to be, as it still is, the finest classical romance in the English language.

• He came to his task fresh from the contemplation of that wonderfully awful "City of the Dead"—not then as extensively exhumed as now—and his mind, already largely imbued with the classic lore of Italy and Greece, was now steeped in the witching influence of climate, scenery, and locality, till, as he walked through the silent city, he re-peopled its deserted and narrow streets with the throng of busy feet and the voice of glad-hearted revellers, he re-decked its roofless and untenanted mansions with the fresco and the mosaic, adorned its ash-strewn gardens with bright-hued flowers, and filled its choked fountains with the gushing waters. The characters and scenes in the story are, as might be naturally imagined, suggested in a great measure by the various buildings which principally attract the attention of those who visit Pompeii. The rich and ostentatious Diomed, whose luxurious suburban mansion is admirably consonant with the portrait of its master; the epicurean

yet kind-hearted Sallust; the Grecian Glaucus, elegant and pure in his tastes, with a soul noble by nature, but enervated by indolence and pleasure, is just such a one as would have reared that exquisitely decorated dwelling known as the "house of the dramatic poet;" the stately fane of the Egyptian Isis, with its prostrate columns mouldering before its Roman-Doric portico; the secret stairs; the hollow *podium* for concealing the priests while delivering their juggling oracles—these called into existence the wise and powerful yet unprincipled Arbaces, the low-minded and crafty Calenus, the duped and unfortunate Apæcides; while the beautiful Ione, and the lovely flower-girl Nydia, are the meet children of the great Italian city, and its classic shores.

The tale commences but a few days before, and terminates with, the destruction of Pompeii. The main plot of the story is the love of Glaucus and Ione, an orphan of Greek parentage but Neapolitan birth, while there is considerable by-plot in the fortunes of the Christian converts, the jealousy of Arbaces, and the hopeless passion for Glaucus of the blind flower-girl of Thessaly, Nydia. This last may fairly be deemed an original creation of the author's, and so we propose to make her our subject. She is first introduced in the second chapter of the book, standing before the portico of a temple, "a young girl with a flower-basket on her right arm, and a small three-stringed instrument of music in the left hand, to whose low and soft tones she was modulating a wild and half-barbaric air. At every pause in the music she gracefully waved her flower-basket round, inviting the loiterers to buy; and many a sesterce was showered into the basket, either in compliment to the music or in compassion for the songstress, for she was blind." Then Glaucus, who had stopped to listen, said, "I must have yon bunch of violets, sweet Nydia," and he dropped a handful of small coins into the basket.

The blind girl started forward as she heard the Athenian's voice; then as suddenly paused, while the blood rushed violently over neck, cheek, and temples. "So you are returned!" said she in a low voice; and then repeated half to herself, "Glaucus is returned!" Kind words, and a request to tend his garden, and he passes on, gladdening the poor girl's heart, yet impressing it more deeply with that sentiment of love which was yet to burn with such a wild, jealous, and fatal passion.

In the house of Glaucus—described with a wonderful detail of all those luxurious appliances and artistic decorations that were to be found in the fairy villas of Pompeii—we are introduced to a banquet in that beautiful

chamber known as "the chamber of Leda." It would not be easy to find a finer piece of writing than this, in which the guests are depicted, each in his characteristic appearance and conversation. It has all the wit and sprightliness of the drama, all the reality of life about it. The feast, the cup, the dice, and the music—how they all place us, as it were, bodily in the midst of the joyous scene! We can almost see all the guests as they recline, and hear the musicians chanting to their instruments "the Bacchic hymn to the Hours."

Glaucus now first hears of the beautiful Ione, a stranger who has lately come to Pompeii, who sings, like Sappho, songs of her own composing, and plays like the Muses on the tibia, and cithera, and lyre. She has all Pompeii at her feet; but she has the soul of Vesta with the girdle of Venus. His curiosity is piqued: he is introduced to her house, and discovers in Ione the beautiful girl whom, months ago, he beheld in the temple of Minerva at Naples, and whose charms he had never forgotten. He is now thoroughly in love; and the next morning, as he gives expression to his feelings aloud in soliloquy, a shadow darkens the threshold of the chamber, and a young female, still half a child in years, breaks upon his solitude.

"She was dressed simply in a white tunic, which reached from the neck to the ankles; under her arm she bore a basket of flowers, and in the other hand she held a bronze water-vase. Her features were more formed than exactly became her years, yet they were soft and feminine in their outline, and, without being beautiful in themselves, they were almost made so by their beauty of expression; there was something ineffably gentle, and you would say patient, in her aspect. A look of resigned sorrow, of tranquil endurance, had banished the smile, but not the sweetness, from her lips; something timid and cautious in her step, something wandering in her eyes, led you to suspect the affliction which she had suffered from her birth: she was blind; but in the orbs themselves there was no visible defect—their melancholy and subdued light was clear, cloudless, and serene."

The poor girl, by her trembling hand and heaving breast, betrays the passion that Glaucus never suspects. She tells how she has been ill, and then passes away into the *viridarium* to tend his flowers.

We may not occupy ourselves much with the main plot of the story, save so far as it concerns her whom we have selected for the illustration of pen and pencil, still less other characters in this work. Arbaces, the Egyptian priest (a character powerfully delineated), the guardian of Ione and her brother Apacides, has set his unholy affections on the former, and has induced the latter to become a priest of Isis. Enraged at the growing love

of Glaucus for Ione, the wily priest fills her mind with stories to the prejudice of her lover, and gradually weaves his meshes around her.

We have a picture of the home-life of the poor flower-girl that is almost appalling. The slave of a vicious and brutal keeper of a low tavern, the resort of villains and gladiators, from which occupation he had, himself retired, Nydia is forced by him and his no less brutalised wife to visit resorts of vice, and minister to the entertainment of dissolute company. The scene in which her pure soul struggles against this degradation is narrated with painful intensity. She appeals in vain to husband and wife—she weeps and flings herself at the feet of Stratonice, embracing her knees, and looking up at her with those sightless eyes, “O my mistress!” sobbed she, “you are a woman—you have had sisters—you have been young like me—feel for me, save me! I will go to those horrible feasts no more.” The appeal is met by insult and rudeness, then drawing herself up with an air to which resolution gave dignity—

“‘Hear me,’ she said: ‘I have served you faithfully—I, who was brought up—Ah! my mother, my poor mother! didst thou dream I should come to this?’ She dashed the tear from her eyes, and proceeded—‘Command me in aught else, and I will obey; but I tell you now, hard, stern, inexorable as you are—I tell you that I will go there no more; or, if I am forced there, that I will implore the mercy of the prætor himself I have said it.’”

The hag seizes her by the hair, and strikes her with a rope. Her cries of pain and terror reach the ears of Glaucus, who has entered the tavern. He bursts the door, and rescues her from the infuriate hag. His kind words send a thrill through her heart; “the tears stood arrested on her cheek, she smiled, she clung to his breast, she kissed his robe as she clung.”

Finally, Glaucus buys the girl, intending to present her to Ione, telling her that her hardest task henceforth shall be to sing her Greek hymns to the loveliest lady in Pompeii.

“The girl sprang from his clasp; a change came over her whole face, so bright the instant before; she sighed heavily, and then once more taking his hand, she said—

“‘I thought I was to go to *your* house?’”

“‘And so thou shalt for the present. Come! we lose time.’”



And so the poor child is cared for by the kind Glaucus, whose every commiserating word and act tends but to nourish the unhappy love which she feels. Then he tells her of Ione; of her beauty, and that he loves her, and will

send the girl to her. She bursts into tears. Glaucus tenderly caresses her as a brother, and the girl crushes down her feelings, and though a shudder passes through her frame she becomes calm and resigned, and weeps no more. Then he imposes, all unconscious of her feelings, the bitter task of going to Ione, and ever speaking to her of his love ; and the poor blind girl obeys. Tearlessly she receives his parting admonition, and kissing his hand, departs. Nydia enters the house of Ione, and kneeling before her, presents the vase of flowers and the letter from Glaucus. With exquisite skill, with masterly knowledge of the human heart in its strength and its weakness, is the interview between Nydia and Ione wrought by the great novelist. The kind words of the lady to the poor girl—the torture which every word that betrays Ione's love for Glaucus brings to the heart of Nydia, who, in the warmth with which she speaks of Glaucus, shows somewhat of her own feelings. How touchingly beautiful is the conclusion of the scene, as she gently and slowly passed her hand over the half-averted features of the fair Greek !

“ Her touch lingered over the braided hair and polished brow —over the downy and damask cheek —over the dimpled lip, the swan-like and whitest neck. ‘ I know, now, that thou art beautiful,’ she said, ‘ and I can picture thee to my darkness henceforth and for ever.’ ”

And then the poor girl bears the letter of Ione to Glaucus, and listens in suppressed agony to his raptures, to be again sent with a fresh letter to her who possesses all the love of him which the poor girl would gladly die to secure for herself. Meantime, Arbaces is drawing his meshes closer and closer round Ione, and induces her to visit him at his mansion. Nydia learns that Ione is gone thither, and, herself familiar with that house, and thoroughly acquainted with the licentious character of the Egyptian priest, she divines all the danger to which Ione is exposed. She flies to the temple, finds Apæcides, informs him of his sister's peril, and together they hurry to the house of Arbaces. We may not linger to give more than an outline of the powerful and intensely exciting scene in which Arbaces declares his passion for Ione. She hears him with terror, and at last declares she loves another. Rage, despair, and ungovernable passion possess the man and drive him to madness. He winds his arms round the girl—she springs from his embrace. In the struggle the letter of Glaucus falls from her bosom—Arbaces seizes it and learns their mutual love. The stings of vengeance are added to the fires of love : he

seizes her again—she tears herself from his grasp and flies—once more he holds her—once again she breaks away, and falls exhausted at the base of the column which supports the head of Isis. That instant the Egyptian is grasped by the shoulder, and turning round he beholds the flashing eyes of Glaucus, and the pale, worn, but menacing countenance of Apæcides. A death-struggle ensues between Arbaces and Glaucus; the latter slips on the smooth marble floor, and falls to the ground. Arbaces places his foot on the breast of his fallen foe. Apæcides rushes forward—his knife is about to descend on Arbaces when the latter wrenches it from the man's feeble grasp, and flings him to the earth. Then with a yell he brandishes the knife on high, to plunge it in the heart of Glaucus, when the first throes of that convulsion which is soon to bury the city in ruins shakes the massive head of Isis from its pedestal, and it falls on the stooping Egyptian, crushing him to the earth. Glaucus staggers to his feet, and bears away his mistress in his arms. Crushed but not slain, the desire of vengeance is now added to the passion of love in the soul of Arbaces.

Julia, the daughter of Diomed, unable to gain the love of Glaucus, seeks from Arbaces a love-philter. He gives her a potion, not to cause love, but to overturn reason. Nydia, whose unhappy passion grows hourly more strong as it is more despairing, learns of the potion from Julia, steals it from under her pillow while she sleeps, and administers it to Glaucus, who rushes forth raging through the streets, and reaches a grove where Apæcides, now a convert to Christianity, is threatening Arbaces to disclose the hidden abominations of his life, and the juggling mummeries of the priests of Isis. Arbaces, believing that he is unseen, slays the priest, and Glaucus just then approaches in his madness, and bends over the dead body. Arbaces springs forward, arrests him, alarms the populace, and denounces him as the murderer. He is seized, tried, condemned, and given the chance of his life in a fight with a lion in the Amphitheatre. Nydia's horror, remorse, and agony are powerfully told. She seeks Arbaces, tells him all, and implores him to restore the health and save the life of Glaucus. He reassures her with promises, but detains her in custody, having also obtained possession of Ione, under the pretext that her reason was unsettled. Nydia contrives to escape from her chamber, and is a witness to a scene between Arbaces and Calenus, in which she learns that the latter had witnessed the murder of Apæcides, and now threatens the disclosure, unless Arbaces will give him some of his hidden



treasures. The Egyptian assents, leads him to a vault, and when Calenus has entered he locks him in. The poor girl is re-captured, but she bribes a slave to bear a letter to Sallust, the friend of Glaucus, disclosing all. An admirable description of the gladiatorial games precedes the terrible encounter which is about to take place between the lion and Glaucus, whose temporary insanity has passed away. At this moment Sallust rushes forward with Calenus, who proclaims the real murderer. The populace shout, "Arbaces to the lion!" Glaucus is released, and a cry of joy—a female voice, a child's voice—rings through the heart of the assembly; it is the voice of the blind Nydia. In vain Arbaces addresses the people, when in his despair he beholds right above, through the *velaria*, the awful fiery vapour issuing from Vesuvius, to which he appeals as the visible intervention of the gods to attest his innocence. A magnificent description of the scene of horror ensues. We cannot give it even in outline. Let us follow the fortunes of her whom we have selected as our heroine, and of those with whom she is bound up. Glaucus learns from Nydia where Ione is confined, and rescues her; and the three, through the deep darkness and the showers of ashes and lava, hasten onward towards the shore, Nydia guiding them unerringly. Her blindness rendered to her alone the scene familiar. In the rush of thousands hurrying by, Nydia is separated from them. In her despair she seeks them everywhere; and at length proceeds towards the shore, and on her way learns that they have taken shelter beneath the arch of the Forum. She retraces her steps, gains the Forum, and stooping down calls on the name of Glaucus

"A weak voice answered—"Who calls on me? Is it the voice of the Shades? Lo! I am prepared!"

"Arise! follow me! Take my hand! Glaucus, thou shalt be saved!"

"In wonder and sudden hope, Glaucus arose—"Nydia still? Ah! thou, then, art safe?"

"The tender joy of his voice pierced the heart of the poor Thessalian, and she blessed him for his thought of her.

"Half leading, half carrying Ione, Glaucus followed his guide. With admirable discretion, she avoided the path which led to the crowd she had just quitted, and by another route sought the shore."

At length, through many dangers and difficulties they gain the shore, and put forth to sea in the darkness, utterly exhausted. Ione slept on the breast of Glaucus, and Nydia lay at his feet.

"In the silence of the general sleep, Nydia rose gently. She bent over the face of Glaucus

—she inhaled the deep breath of his heavy slumber—timidly and sadly she kissed his brow—his lips. She felt for his hand—it was locked in that of Ione; she sighed deeply, and her face darkened. Again she kissed his brow, and with her hair wiped from it the damps of night. ‘May the gods bless you, Athenian!’ she murmured: ‘may you be happy with your beloved one. May you sometimes remember Nydia! Alas! she is of no further use on earth!’

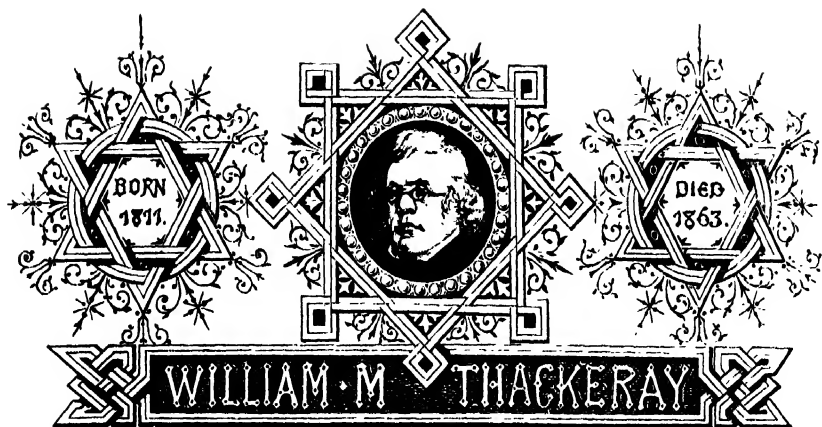
“With these words she turned away. Slowly she crept along by the *fori*, or platforms, to the farther side of the vessel, and, pausing, bent low over the deep. The cool spray dashed upward on her feverish brow. ‘It is the kiss of death,’ she said—‘it is welcome.’ The balmy air played through her waving tresses: she put them from her face, and raised those eyes—so tender, though so lightless—to the sky, whose soft face she had never seen!

“‘No, no!’ she said, half aloud, and in a musing and thoughtful tone, ‘I cannot endure it; this jealous, exacting love—it shatters my whole soul in madness! I might harm him again—wretch that I was! I have saved him—twice saved him—happy, happy thought! Why not *die* happy?—it is the last glad thought I can ever know. Oh sacred Sea! I hear thy voice invitingly—it hath a refreshing and joyous call. They say that in thy embrace is dishonour—that thy victims cross not the fatal Styx. Be it so!—I would not meet him in the Shades, for I should meet him still with *her*! Rest—rest—rest!—there is no other Elysium for a heart like mine!’

“A sailor, half dozing on the deck, heard a slight splash on the waters. Drowsily he looked up, and behind, as the vessel merrily bounded on, he fancied he saw something white above the waves; but it vanished in an instant. He turned round again, and dreamed of his home and children.

“When the lovers awoke, their first thought was of each other—their next of Nydia. She was not to be found—none had seen her since the night. Every crevice of the vessel was searched—there was no trace of her. Mysterious from first to last, the blind Thessalian had vanished for ever from the living world! They guessed her fate in silence; and Glaucus and Ione, while they drew nearer to each other (feeling each other the world itself), forgot their deliverance, and wept as for a departed sister.”

One scarcely knows how the novelist could have otherwise disposed of this most beautiful creation of his genius. There is a wonderful pathos and charm thrown around the poor flower-girl, that command for her by far the profoundest interest that we feel for any of the female characters in the story. Gloom and brightness, joy and sorrow, nobleness of feeling and errors of education. Nature had sown in the heart of the poor blind girl the seed of virtues never destined to ripen, and of feelings which her sad destiny had thwarted and turned into faults.



“THE NEWCOMES.”

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY takes high place in the literature of this century, and when it has passed away, his name will still be fresh and green—his fame large and enduring. But, like others, he won his way slowly. The growth of the oak is slow, but its life is the life of ages; and it is still in the vigour of its middle life when trees of quicker development have grown up, and bloomed, and perished. Yet as we look back upon the earlier contributions of Thackeray to periodical literature—the lively and picturesque papers of Michael Angelo Titmarsh—we can see the germs of those powers which were in after years to expand into such strength and excellence. That eccentric but brilliant writer, John Sterling, saw what was in Thackeray, and predicted his future greatness. Alluding, in 1841, to “The Great Hoggarty Diamond,” he wrote to his mother, “What is there better in Fielding or Goldsmith? The man is a true genius, and, with quiet and comfort, might produce masterpieces that would last as long as any we have, and delight millions of unborn readers.” Surely the prediction has come true—“Vanity Fair” is a masterpiece and *sui generis*, thoroughly original.

terribly true, laying bare, with a keen ridicule and a remorseless sincerity, all the sins and weaknesses of humanity. And there are other masterpieces more pleasing, although not more powerful—the beautiful tale of “*The Esmonds*,” refined, and quaint, and elegant; and that fine story of “*The Newcomes*,” so vigorous, so caustic, so tender. And these will last, no doubt, to be the delight of unborn ages, as they delight us to-day.

It is from this last-mentioned work that we propose to take our character. Colonel Newcome and Ethel are the ablest conceptions in the story—both intensely interesting; but the former is, to our thinking, the most original, though not the grandest. And so let us endeavour to present to our readers a sketch of dear Thomas Newcome. Faint in its colouring, broken in its outline, imperfect in its details, that portrait must needs be—like those hurried sketches which the artists take stealthily in the great galleries of pictures which they are forbidden to copy. We cannot hope to present our hero altogether as a solitary figure; others must now and then find a place more or less prominent beside him, for it is in his intercourse with them that all the points of his character, in their strength and their weakness, are brought out. A few words will suffice for the history of his boyhood and youth.

On the marriage of his father with a second wife, Tom is transferred first to the care of a nurse, and then to the school of Grey Friars, where he played tricks, broke windows, and was well flogged. When brought home, he rebelled against the authority of his puritanical stepmother, and was sent to learn mathematics and French (to fit him for a cadetship in India) to an exiled French noble, with whose daughter, Léonore, he falls in love. She returns his passion: the affair is discovered and interdicted by the parents on both sides, and Tom goes in rage and despair to India. The high-spirited fine lad turns out a brave soldier, marries, becomes a widower, and sends his son Clive to England while yet a child; and he, too, goes to Grey Friars. At length Tom returns to England a colonel and C.B., a simple-hearted, kindly, noble-minded gentleman, and a true veteran. Here is the first description we have of him, given by Arthur Pendennis:—

“There came into the Cave a gentleman with a lean brown face and long black moustachios, dressed in very loose clothes, and evidently a stranger to the place. At least he had not visited it for a long time. He was pointing out changes to a lad who was in his company; and calling for sherry-and-water, he listened to the music, and twirled his moustachios with great enthusiasm.

"At the very first glimpse of me, the boy jumped up from the table, bounded across the room, ran to me with his hands out, and blushing, said, 'Don't you know me?'"

"It was little Newcome, my schoolfellow, whom I had not seen for six years, grown a fine tall young stripling now, with the same bright blue eyes which I remembered when he was quite a little boy.

"'What the deuce brings you here?' said I.

"He laughed and looked roguish. 'My father—that's my father.'"

The old colonel joins Pendennis and his party of college friends, thanks him for his kindness to his son, in a voice exceedingly soft and pleasant, and with a cordiality so simple and sincere, that it at once ensured respect. He enters at once with wonderful zest into all the pleasures of the scene, joining in all the choruses with an exceedingly sweet voice, and, finally, singing an old English ballad in a style so tender, that it was received with general applause.

Then a half-drunken reprobate commences a ribald song, but the colonel starts up at the end of the second verse, puts on his hat, seizes his stick, looks as ferocious as if he were going to fight a Pindaree, and roars out "Silence!" Some cry "Hear, hear!" others shout "Go on!"

"'Go on!' cries the Colonel, in his high voice, trembling with anger. 'Does any gentleman say 'Go on'? Does any man who has a wife and sisters, or children at home, say 'Go on' to such disgusting ribakry as this? Do you dare, sir, to call yourself a gentleman, and to say that you hold the king's commission, and to sit down amongst Christians and men of honour, and defile the ears of young boys with this wicked balderdash?'"

"'Why do you bring young boys here, old boy?' cries a voice of the malcontents.

"'Why? Because I thought I was coming to a society of gentlemen,' cried out the indignant Colonel. 'Because I never could have believed that Englishmen could meet together and allow a man, and an old man, so to disgrace himself. For shame, you old wretch! Go home to your bed, you hoary old sinner! And for my part, I'm not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonour, drunkenness and whiskey may bring a man.'"

What fine points of character are here brought out, and how masterly is every touch in the portrait! What a gentle, loving, brave heart! what a pure and simple nature! what a true-gentlemanly scorn of what is low and profligate! How well one can fancy the rakes and scamps who heard him writhing under his rebukes, and those with better feelings offering him the homage of silent respect! And the next morning, like a true gentleman,

he calls on Pendennis, to apologise for his abrupt behaviour; and he is delighted with the literary men he meets at his rooms, and discourses after his own antiquated ideas on literature, and declares Dr. Johnson to be the greatest of men, quotes scraps of the Latin grammar, and pronounces Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Charles Grandison, and Don Quixote the finest gentlemen in the world. The worthy old soldier does not much suit either of his step-brothers, Sir Brian and Hobson, the wealthy bankers, who cannot understand his frank and simple nature, and despise him for loving his poor relatives; but the soldier cares little for them or their opinions, save so far as his kindly nature makes him desire to be loving to all. It is, however, as a father that the exceeding beauty of his character is displayed. His love for Clive (whom the author perhaps designed to be the hero of his novel), "as fine a lad," as his friend Binnie declares, "as I ever set eyes on," draws from that noble heart inexhaustible treasures of tenderness, devotion, self-sacrifice, and generosity. Here is a single touch of the artist's pencil that brings out this paternal love with a tenderness that has something solemnising in it. Binnie finds the colonel early in the morning in his sitting-room, puffing a cigar, and without his shoes. To his friend's boisterous salutation the colonel says, "Hush!" with his finger to his mouth, and advancing towards him as noiselessly as a ghost.

"Have ye been breathing a prayer over your rosy infant's slumbers, Tom?" asks Mr. Binnie.

"And if I have, James Binnie," the Colonel said gravely, and his sallow face blushing somewhat, "if I have, I hope I've done no harm. The last time I saw him asleep was nine years ago, a sickly little pale-faced boy in his little cot; and now, sir, that I see him again, strong and handsome, and all that a fond father can wish to see a boy, I should be an ungrateful villain, James, if I didn't if I didn't do what you said just now, and thank God."

Humility, genuine humility of spirit, is another trait of this Christian soldier, which is ever in admirable keeping with the fitting pride of a gentleman, who never forgets his own social position, nor fails to respect that of others.

Again, when at a dinner given by the colonel, Barnes Newcome, his nephew, was guilty of disrespect to his host, and Clive resented the insult by dashing wine and glass at his mean, vicious cousin, against whom he had a natural antipathy, the old soldier started back in terror, and exclaimed—

"Gracious God! my boy insult a gentleman at my table!"

Then, the next morning, when the boy awoke he found his father with a solemn face at his bedfoot.

"'You drank too much wine last night, and disgraced yourself, sir,' the old soldier said. 'You must get up, and eat humble pie this morning, my boy.'

"'Humble what, father?' asked the lad, hardly aware of his words, or the scene before him. 'O, I've got such a headache!'

"'Serve you right, sir. Many a young fellow has had to go on parade in the morning with a headache earned overnight. Drink this water. Now jump up. Now, dash the water well over your head. There you come! Make your toilette quickly, and let us be off, and find cousin Barnes before he has left home.'

Be sure the colonel goes to his native town to see his dear old nurse, and to Brighton. There he meets the children of his brother, Sir Brian, one of whom is Ethel, that most beautiful conception of the author.

Uncle and niece fall in love with each other, and as the former smokes his cigar in the balcony in the evening, and looks fondly at the retreating figure of the frank, generous, bright young creature, he builds castles in the air, and wishes that some day Clive may be married to his fair cousin Ethel. Clive does fall in love with his cousin, and she, too, at times seems to love him; but as she grows up to womanhood she treats him with reserve, for she is under the dominion of her haughty, worldly old grandmother, Lady Kew, who will leave her all her money, and intends that she shall marry her cousin, Lord Kew. But we cannot follow Clive or Ethel, though they must now and then re-appear while we are engaged with our dear old colonel. He lavishes his love on the girl, which she returns, but in time she becomes constrained in her manner, and they seldom meet, and old Lady Kew takes occasion to tell the colonel that Ethel has been disposed of. At length the colonel returns to his duty in India. Clive pursues his profession abroad with indifferent success. Ethel's match with Lord Kew is broken off, and Clive's hopes revive, to be again crushed—for old Lady Kew has designed her for another lord, and the girl herself is somewhat infected with the worldliness and ambition of those around her. Our colonel, meantime, becomes connected with the Bundelcund Banking Company, realises an immense fortune, and returns home, his loving heart filled with but one feeling—that of uniting his son and Ethel. — So he asks Sir Barnes, who has succeeded his deceased father, to dinner, and opens his heart to him, tells him what he is worth, and proposes to settle all at once on Clive—except two hundred a-year for himself—if he marries Ethel.

The mean and false Sir Barnes praises the colonel's noble generosity (thoroughly hating him and his son all the while), assuring him he would gladly assist him, but that Ethel is engaged. The colonel discovers that Barnes has been lying, and has never communicated with Ethel, or delivered his letter to her. Then we have a grand scene, in which the old soldier confronts the banker before his own clerks, and calls him cheat and liar.

Old Lady Kew has succeeded in hunting down a marquis, has brought him to bay, and he is the accepted suitor of Ethel. But an event in the family—the elopement of Sir Barnes's wife—has given Ethel a shock. Her noble and true nature disentangles itself from the meshes of ambition and vanity that had well-nigh ruined it. She sees what is the result of a woman marrying one whom she dislikes for position, when her affections are placed elsewhere; and she breaks off her engagement with the marquis, takes charge of the deserted children of her brother, and devotes her life to charity and good deeds. Clive in despair marries little Rosa Mackenzie. The colonel, whose simple soul is able to see only one side of a question, believes thoroughly in Ethel's worldliness, and closes his heart against her. Our good colonel seems changed in heart, changed in his whole demeanour towards all the world, even towards Clive, whose evident unhappiness is like a reproach to him, and he goes down to the borough of Newcome, to contest it against Sir Barnes. After a day's canvass he sits alone in the inn. Clive enters, candle in hand.

"As each saw the other's face, it was so very sad and worn and pale, that the young man started back; and the elder, with quite the tenderness of old days, cried, 'God bless me, my boy, how ill you look! Come and warm yourself—look, the fire's out! Have something, Clivy!'

"For months past they had not had a really kind word. The tender old voice smote upon Clive, and he burst into sudden tears. They rained upon his father's trembling old brown hand, as he stooped down and kissed it.

"'You look very ill, too, father,' says Clive.

"'Ill? not I!' cries the father, still keeping the boy's hand under both his own on the mantelpiece. 'Such a battered old fellow as I am has a right to look the worse for wear; but you, boy, why do *you* look so pale?'

"'I have seen a ghost, father,' Clive answered. Thomas, however, looked alarmed and inquisitive, as though the boy was wandering in his mind.

"'The ghost of my youth, father, the ghost of my happiness, and the best days of my life,' groaned out the young man. 'I saw Ethel to-day. I went to see Sarah Mason, and she was there.'

" 'I had seen her, but I did not speak of her,' said the father. 'I thought it was best not to mention her to you, my poor boy. And are—are you fond of her still, Clive?'

" 'Still? once means always in these things, father, doesn't it? Once means to-day, and yesterday, and for ever and ever.'

So they spoke long and tenderly together, till father and son understood each other as they had never done before.

The colonel is returned for the borough, but he never takes his seat, for the Bundelcund Bank fails and he is ruined. Then it is that our dear old Thomas Newcome comes out grandly. He refuses all aid from friends, he sells off everything—house, equipages, plate—and with his son, his daughter-in-law, and her mother, retires to Boulogne. Very sad is the history of these days of poverty; Clive labouring to gain a scanty livelihood, dejected and hopeless; the colonel subjected to the insolent abuse of a heartless woman, who accuses him of having ruined her and her daughter—which he bears with the meekness of a Christian and the dignity of a gentleman.

After a time they return to London, and the colonel is away, as it is supposed, with an old friend. Ah! we shall soon see with what noble humility he accepted his fate; how that old man, lonely and broken down, marched honestly on the path of duty. Pendennis goes on the Founder's Day to visit his old school of Grey Friars.

"The boys are already in their seats, with smug, fresh faces and shining white collars; the old black-gowned pensioners are on their benches; the chapel is lighted, and Founder's Tomb, with its grotesque carvings, monsters, heraldries, darkles and shines with the most wonderful shadows and lights. . . . Yonder sit some threescore old gentlemen-pensioners of the hospital, listening to the prayers and the psalms. . . . The service for Founder's Day is a special one, and we hear—

" '23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way.

" '24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

" '25. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.'

"As we came to this verse, I chanced to look up from my book towards the swarm of black-coated pensioners: and amongst them—amongst them—sat Thomas Newcome.

"His dear old head was bent down over his Prayer-book; there was no mistaking him. He wore the black gown of the pensioners of the Hospital of Grey Friars. His order of the Bath was on his breast. He stood there amongst the poor brethren, uttering the responses to the psalm. The steps of this good man had been ordered higher by Heaven's

decree : to this Alms-house ! Here it was ordained that a life all love, and kindness, and honour, should end ! I heard no more of prayers, and psalms, and sermon, after that. . . . My dear, dear old friend ! I ran to him with a warmth and eagerness of recognition, which no doubt showed themselves in my face and accents, as my heart was moved at the sight of him. His own wan face flushed up when he saw me, and his hand shook in mine. 'I have found a home, Arthur,' said he. 'Don't you remember, before I went to India, when we came to see the old Grey Friars, and visited Captain Scarsdale in his room—a poor brother like me—an old Peninsular man ? Scarsdale is gone now, sir, and is where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest ; and I thought then, when we saw him here would be a place for an old fellow, when his career was over, to hang his sword up ; to humble his soul, and to wait thankfully for the end.'

And many a loving friend visited the grand old man, proud in his humility, meek and gentle under his trials ; but his abode was for a time concealed from his daughter-in-law and her mother. Lady Kew has died, and Ethel is an heiress, and has discovered a letter of the colonel's step-mother, expressing her intention to bequeath a large sum to Clive, written on the day of her death. Ethel believes, in her noble, honest heart, that Barnes will fulfil the wish of his grandmother. That gentleman, to her astonishment, declines to do so, and Ethel has the money lodged to Clive's credit, as "coming from the family." Next she goes to Grey Friars, but the colonel is not there, for it is Christmas-day, and he has gone to Clive's. She went round the apartment, looked at the pictures of Clive and his boy, the two sabres crossed over the mantelpiece, the Bible laid on the table. She walked up to the humble bed, and sat down on a chair near it. No doubt her heart prayed for him who slept there. She turned round where his black pensioner's cloak was hanging on the wall, and lifted up the garment and kissed it reverently. Then she wrote "Ethel" on a piece of paper, and left it on the Bible, and departed to Clive's house. We pass lightly over the scene there. Clive ran down when her name was announced, and brought her up.

"It is I, Ethel, uncle !" the young lady said, taking his hand, and kneeling down between his knees, she flung her arms round him, and kissed him, and wept on his shoulder. His consciousness had quite returned ere an instant was over. He embraced her with the warmth of his old affection, uttering many brief words of love, kindness, and tenderness, such as men speak when strongly moved.

"The little boy had come wondering up to the chair whilst this embrace took place, and Clive's tall figure bent over the three. Rosa's eyes were not good to look at, as she stared at the group with a ghastly smile. Mrs. Mackenzie surveyed the scene in haughty state.



from behind the sofa cushions. She tried to take one of Rosa's lean hot hands. The poor child tore it away, leaving her rings behind her; lifted her hands to her face, and cried—cried as if her little heart would break. Ah me! what a story was there; what an outburst of pent-up feeling! what a passion of pain!"

Ethel is gone, and the colonel says he must be back at ten—"military time; drum beats—no, bell tolls—at ten; gates close," and he laughs, and shakes his old head. Then the legacy is announced, and Clive tells his father he need never go back to Grey Friars; but he answers, "Not go back, Clivy? Must go back, boy, to say 'Adsum!' when my name is called. 'Newcome?' 'Adsum! Hey!' that is what we used to say—we used to say!"

Let us pass over the sad dinner scene, and the premature illness and death of poor Rosa, and come to the last scene of all. The colonel is very ill; Clive is with him, and Ethel, but he does not know them. When the bell rang for the morning chapel, he got up and went towards his gown and put it on, and would have fallen, but he was led back to his bed; and so he lingered on for weeks, his mind gone at intervals, and then feebly rallying. And Madame Florac is with him—his first love—a love they both kept holy and pure through life; and he would address her in French, and call her *Léonore*. At last he was too weak to rise, and his mind began to wander:—

"He talked louder; he gave the word of command, spoke Hindostanee as if to his men. Then he spoke words in French rapidly, seizing a hand that was near him, and crying, 'Toujours, toujours!' But it was Ethel's hand which he took. Ethel and Clive and the nurse were in the room with him; the latter came to us who were sitting in the adjoining apartment; Madame de Florac was there, with my wife and Bayham.

"At the look in the woman's countenance Madame de Florac started up. 'He is very bad, he wanders a great deal,' the nurse whispered. The French lady fell instantly on her knees, and remained rigid in prayer.

"Some time afterwards Ethel came in, with a scared face to our pale group. 'He is calling for you again, dear lady,' she said, going up to Madame de Florac, who was still kneeling; 'and just now he said he wanted Pendennis to take care of his boy. He will not know you.' She hid her tears as she spoke.

"She went into the room, where Clive was at the bed's foot; the old man within it talked on rapidly for awhile: then again he would sigh and be still: once more I heard him say hurriedly, 'Take care of him when I'm in India;' and then with a heart-rending voice he called out, '*Léonore, Léonore!*' She was kneeling by his side now. The patient's voice sank into faint murmurs; only a moan now and then announced that he was not asleep.

"At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat a time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo! he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master."

There hangs up in Clive's painting-room, in after years, when he has married Ethel, a head, painted at one sitting, of a man rather bald, with hair touched with grey, with a large moustache, and a sweet mouth half smiling beneath it, and melancholy eyes. And Clive shows that portrait of their grandfather to his children, and tells them that the whole world never saw a nobler gentleman.





PECKSNIFF.

THE death of the great novelist, Charles Dickens, is too recent to enable men to form a just estimate of his genius and writings. The world is yet mourning over its loss too keenly to suffer it to approach the subject with the calmness that such a task requires. Contemporary criticism may deal with the living in a spirit bordering on justice; and the long-passed-away will receive their meed unaffected by any of those influences that obscure or warp the judgment; but the repose of the newly-buried dead is sacred for at least a season: we approach their graves but to throw flowers upon them.

So, let us now think only upon the merits of Charles Dickens, and leave his faults as a writer—for faults he had—for other pens and other times. Let us think and speak of all the good that he did and promoted—all the vices that he lashed and repressed—all the meannesses that he laughed to scorn all the abuses that he exposed and reformed—all the social wrongs that he denounced and redressed—all the cant and hypocrisy that he scathed with his satire—all the humble worth that he honoured, defending the poor against the rich, the weak against the strong. Let us think of the kindly affections of our nature that he cherished and held up for imitation—of

the thousand homesteads that he made happy, and the thousand sad and drooping hearts that he cheered and strengthened for their tasks. Peace be to his ashes! As he sleeps in his honoured rest in the grand old abbey, laid amidst congenial clay, safe from harm and intrusion, so let him rest in the hearts of the British people. Let them watch over him with a loving care that no rude hand assail him, even as Rizpah the daughter of Aiah watched the dead sons of Saul, and "suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

Dickens was the creator of a style of novel that will not have many imitators, and few successful ones. His great object was that of moral and social reformation. And this fact, we think, explains many of the peculiarities to be found in his writings.

The leading characters in his novels are drawn, not to exhibit ordinary persons, in whom virtues and vices, strength and weakness, good and evil, are blended in varying proportions so as to give varying results; but to illustrate some dominant principle or passion which exerts its mastery over the whole life of the individual and makes him what he is. Hence, they have, as a necessity, somewhat of the exaggeration of the drama, and herein they differ from the unexaggerated portraits of Scott, or Fielding, or Goldsmith, or Thackeray. So, in some great allegorical painting we see a figure occupying the foreground and engrossing the attention, and we tolerate the increased dimensions and the unreal magnitude, because we feel that it is not the misconception but the design of the artist to make it stand out beyond all that surrounds it. "The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit," one of the ablest of Dickens's novels, illustrates our observations. The tale is one of profound interest, of great power, of vast knowledge of human nature, and of wonderful artistic skill. Its main plot is complicated with many subordinate episodes, and many well-drawn characters, who, however, more or less move about the two principal actors in the drama—Old Martin Chuzzlewit and Pecksniff, and with these two we shall mainly concern ourselves.

Two great moral lessons are enforced, two monster vices of humanity are exposed—vices not the less monstrous that they are found in larger or smaller proportions to leaven the greater part of mankind, and to influence, more or less covertly, men in their relations with each other—selfishness and hypocrisy. The former vice is, indeed, displayed in all the members of the Chuzzlewit family, even more patently than in old Martin. It is pitiable in

his sordid brother, Anthony—loathsome and appalling in avaricious Jonas—and alloys for a while the fair, bright, manly character of the younger Martin, till it is worked off in the furnace of trial and suffering, and leaves only the pure ore behind. These are all relieved by the portrait of pure unselfishness, of simple, credulous faith and love—Tom Pinch. And others there are to brighten the gloom—strong-hearted, generous, self-denying Mark Tapley, and gentle, enduring Mary Graham, and one or two more with whom we may not occupy ourselves. But the most supremely conceived villain of the tale is Pecksniff. In him we have the incarnation of hypocrisy in its meanest, loathliest aspects, combining too, in virtue of his consanguinity to the Chuzzlewits, with their characteristic selfishness. This character is so elaborately drawn, so highly finished, and so many touches are continually put into the picture from time to time throughout the tale, from the second chapter to the last, that it would be hopeless to attempt an adequate representation of it. We must be content to present an outline, working in some of the higher lights and deeper shadows.

After a marvellous description of a storm, with that vivid power by which Dickens made insentient things think and act, we are first introduced to Mr. Pecksniff, architect and land surveyor, in his house in a Wiltshire village, and his two daughters, Charity and Mercy.

“Mr. Pecksniff was a moral man. So he was. Perhaps there never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff: especially in his conversation and correspondence. It was once said of him by a homely admirer, that he had a Fortunatus’s purse of good sentiments in his inside. In this particular he was like the girl in the fairy tale, except that if they were not actual diamonds which fell from his lips, they were the very brightest paste, and shone prodigiously. He was a most exemplary man: fuller of virtuous precept than a copy-book. Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there: but these were his enemies; the shadows cast by his brightness; that was all. His very throat was moral. You saw a good deal of it. You looked over a very low fence of white cravat (whereof no man had ever beheld the tie, for he fastened it behind), and there it lay, a valley between two jutting heights of collar, serene and whiskerless before you. It seemed to say on the part of Mr. Pecksniff, ‘There is no deception, ladies and gentlemen, all is peace, a holy calm pervades me.’ So did his hair, just grizzled with an iron-grey, which was all brushed off his forehead, and stood bolt upright, or slightly drooped in kindred action with his heavy eyelids. So did his person, which was sleek though free from corpulency. So did his manner, which was soft and oily. In a word, even his plain black suit, and state of widower, and dangling double eyeglass, all tended to the same purpose, and cried aloud, ‘Behold the moral Pecksniff!’”

The true nature of the hypocrite is first displayed in a conversation with his daughters and John Westlock—who leaves him in contempt—and poor Tom Pinch, who believes in him as the best of men. And now old Martin Chuzzlewit comes on the scene as taken suddenly ill, while travelling with Mary Graham. He lies at the “Blue Dragon.” Martin is a strange humorist, somewhat soured by his experience of life. He had been poor, has become independent; no hoarder of money, no spendthrift; but he has found wealth bring but pain and bitterness. He will see no doctor, and the landlady brings in Pecksniff, who recognises his cousin. Some sharp words from Martin are met by fawning and hypocrisy from Pecksniff, who protests he is influenced only by motives of humanity as a stranger. But the old man sees through him, and after some contemptuous remarks—

“‘I tell you, man,’ he added, with increasing bitterness, ‘that I have gone, a rich man, among people of all grades and kinds; relatives, friends, and strangers; among people in whom, when I was poor, I had confidence, and justly, for they never once deceived me then, or, to me, wronged each other. But I have never found one nature no, not one—in which, being wealthy and alone, I was not forced to detect the latent corruption that lay hid within it, waiting for such as I to bring it forth. Treachery, deceit, and low design; hatred of competitors, real or fancied, for my favour; meanness, falsehood, baseness, and servility; or,’ and here he looked closely in his cousin’s eyes, ‘or an assumption of honest independence, almost worse than all; these are the beauties which my wealth has brought to light.’”

Then, after much bitter sarcasm, Martin falls back on his pillow. Pecksniff stands erect in all the dignity of goodness, draws out his pocket-handkerchief, affects to weep, and smiling faintly, says—

“‘But, Mr. Chuzzlewit, while I am forgetful of myself, I owe it to myself, and to my character ay, sir, and I *have* a character which is very dear to me, and will be the best inheritance of my two daughters. . . . And I tell you, sir,’ said Mr. Pecksniff, towering on tiptoe among the curtains, as if he were literally rising above all worldly considerations, and were fain to hold on tight, to keep himself from darting skyward like a rocket, ‘I tell you, without fear or favour, that it will not do for you to be unmindful of your grandson, young Martin, who has the strongest natural claim upon you. It will not do, sir,’ repeated Mr. Pecksniff, shaking his head. ‘You may think it will do, but it won’t.’”

Then the old man’s suspicions are aroused, and he mutters, “Can the false-hearted boy have chosen such a tool as yonder fellow? Oh, self, self, self! At every turn nothing but self.” Alas! he did not yet understand how strong was the principle, selfishness, still in his own heart.

Nevertheless, the old man guessed shrewdly. His grandson had offended him by avowing his love for Mary, was dismissed his household in anger; has answered an advertisement of Pecksniff for a pupil. That far-sighted gentleman set his eye on the young man for one of his daughters, and hence his disinterested interference in his favour. All the relations of old Martin, hearing of his illness, congregate about the village inn as carrion-crows about a carcass, and Pecksniff is detected in the act of putting his ear to the keyhole of the sick man's door. When they were all nigh driven to despair—for the old man would see none of them, nor receive their letters—they all made common cause, and held a council of war in Pecksniff's best parlour. An admirable scene that is in which all the Chuzzlewit kin are brought together, and their characters—all so distinct, yet all so alike in the one vice of selfishness—are drawn with the vigour of a master hand. Old Anthony calls Pecksniff a hypocrite, and the latter says to his daughter, "Charity, my dear, when I take my chamber candlestick to-night, remind me to be more than usually particular in praying for Mr. Anthony Chuzzlewit, who has done me an injustice." And in the midst of the most bitter squabbling on all sides, they are electrified with the intelligence that old Martin has suddenly decamped, no one knows where; and thereupon all the relations go their several ways, heaping abuse and maledictions upon Pecksniff, who is consoled with the reflection that they had hated him to the utmost before.

Young Martin is received by Pecksniff with the most affectionate attention, and with the utmost sweetness and innocent cordiality by his daughters, who are thoroughly of the Pecksniffian type. The character of young Martin is very skilfully portrayed. Frank, affectionate, manly, good-natured though he is, his selfishness, nevertheless, is continually showing itself—not broadly or offensively, but in little matters that are as truly indicative of the disease as the red spot is of the plague. He uses every one, careless of the trouble it gives, and especially self-sacrificing Tom Pinch, his fellow-pupil, whom he makes his confidant. Things now take a strange turn. Pecksniff goes up to London to meet old Martin, by appointment. After snubbing Pecksniff, who takes it humbly, Martin says--

"I very much regret that you and I held such a conversation together, as that which passed between us at our last meeting. I very much regret that I laid open to you what were then my thoughts of you, so freely as I did. The intentions that I bear towards you, now, are of another kind; deserted by all in whom I have ever trusted; hood-winked and

beset by all who should help and sustain me ; I fly to you for refuge. I confide in you to be my ally ; to attach yourself to me by ties of interest and expectation ;' he laid great stress upon these words, though Mr. Pecksniff particularly begged him not to mention it : 'and to help me to visit the consequences of the very worst species of meanness, dissimulation, and subtlety on the right heads.'"

Pecksniff cringes and fawns, and talks sentiment, till old Martin tells him how his grandson has deceived him, and engaged himself in marriage without his consent, and requires Pecksniff to turn him out of doors.

Hereupon Pecksniff launches out into eloquent abuse of the monster who has basely deceived them all, and declares he will at once purge his house of this pollution. And so he did, the moment he returned home. His lofty scorn of one whom he had flattered when last they met makes the young man indignantly demand an explanation, which he gets.

"'You have deceived me. You have imposed upon a nature which you knew to be confiding and unsuspecting. You have obtained admission, sir,' said Mr. Pecksniff, rising, 'to this house, on perverted statements, and on false pretences.'"

And Pecksniff says a great deal more that is base and lying, and ends--

"'Go forth, young man ! Like all who know you, I renounce you !'"

The young man expresses his contempt and leaves the house, determined to seek his fortune in America ; and so he does, with Mark Tapley ; but of this more hereafter, for we have to do with his grandfather and Pecksniff. Time goes on, and old Martin surprises Pecksniff by a visit, as he is again stopping at the "Blue Dragon." He is a changed man, thoroughly broken down, his senses dulled, and his whole manner subdued ; and day by day he seems to be sinking. Pecksniff determines to take possession of him : his plans are formed. He induces the old man to come, with Mary Graham, to live with him, and by degrees gains an entire ascendancy over him. Then he pays his nauseous addresses to Mary, who tells him she knows his real nature and despises him. Even Tom Pinch at last discovers he is a scoundrel, and they part. All this time young Martin and Mark Tapley have been fighting against adverse fortune. Martin has bought, with Mark's money, a plot in a far-away settlement—the thriving city of Eden—which turns out to be a swindle and a swamp. Sickness, suffering,

sorrow, and ruin, borne by Mark with unfailing good-humour, and by Martin, at first, with despondency, work in the latter a total reformation of character, by making him sensible of his own selfishness; and at length they make their way home with borrowed money, and they learn at the "Blue Dragon" how matters stand between the old man and Pecksniff. Martin sends a letter to his grandfather by Mark; he gives it to Pecksniff, who tears it.

"And he said he wanted an answer, did he?" asked Mr. Pecksniff in his most persuasive manner.

"Mark replied in the affirmative.

"He shall have an answer. Certainly," said Mr. Pecksniff, tearing the letter into small pieces, as mildly as if that were the most flattering attention a correspondent could receive. 'Have the goodness to give him that, with my compliments, if you please. Good morning!' Whereupon he handed Mark the scraps, retired, and shut the door."

Martin then forces an entrance and stands before his grandfather, and Mary and Pecksniff are in the room. The interview is finely told. As the old man recognised him, Martin saw him droop his grey head and hide his face in his hands. It smote him to the heart, and he hurriedly advanced to seize the old man's hand; but Pecksniff intercepted him.

"Grandfather!" cried Martin. "Hear me! I implore you, let me speak!"

"Would you, sir! Would you!" said Mr. Pecksniff, dodging about, so as to keep himself always between them. "Is it not enough, sir, that you come into my house like a thief in the night, or I should rather say, for we can never be too particular on the subject of Truth, like a thief in the day-time: bringing your dissolute companions with you? . . ."

"Stand aside," said the old man, stretching out his hand; "and let me see what it is I used to love so dearly."

"It is right that you should see it, my friend," said Mr. Pecksniff. "It is well that you should see it, my noble sir. It is desirable that you should contemplate it in its true proportions. Behold it! There it is, sir. There it is!"

"And that," he said, "is he. Ah! that is he! Say what you wish to say; but come no nearer."

And young Martin told all his story with pathetic earnestness, while Pecksniff, as chorus, spoke beautifully of truth and duty.

"As he ceased, the grey head of the old man drooped again, and he concealed his face behind his outspread fingers."

At length he desires Pecksniff to speak for him, and the latter delivers an oration full of bitterness and insult and righteous indignation against the young man, and fulsome fawning flattery towards the old. But the young man will not even acknowledge the existence of Pecksniff, and says to his grandfather—

“‘I have not heard your voice. I have not heard your spirit.’

“‘Tell him again,’ said the old man.”

Then Pecksniff said he had no more to say, nothing to urge; and the old man rose, took Pecksniff’s arm, and turning at the door, waved his hand to his grandson, and said—

“‘You have heard him. Go away. It is all over. Go!’”

A hurried interchange of love between the young man and Mary ensues, and then he goes away. Let us pass over an interval during which the action of the tale is rapidly forwarded for all those concerned, and let us bring them together at the final scene in the lodgings of old Martin, who had come up to London and summoned them. We know few tales that conclude with an effect more powerfully dramatic in its surprise. We are unwillingly compelled to abridge it. Young Martin entered: the old man scarcely looked at him, and pointed to a chair. The last was Pecksniff, who came bounding into the room, asking for his venerable friend, and with virtuous indignation warning away the vermin and blood-suckers he sees around.

“He advanced with outstretched arms to take the old man’s hand. But he had not seen how the hand clasped and clutched the stick within its grasp. As he came smiling on, and got within his reach, old Martin, with his burning indignation crowded into one vehement burst, and flashing out of every line and wrinkle in his face, rose up, and struck him down upon the ground.

“‘Drag him away! Take him out of my reach,’ said Martin, ‘or I can’t help it. The strong restraint I have put upon my hands has been enough to palsy them. I am not master of myself, while he is within their range. Drag him away!’

“Seeing that he still did not rise, Mr. Tapley, without any compromise about it, actually did drag him away, and stick him up on the floor, with his back against the opposite wall.

“‘Hear me, rascal!’ said Mr. Chuzzlewit. ‘I have summoned you here to witness your own work. I have summoned you here to witness it, because I know it will be gall and wormwood to you! I have summoned you here to witness it, because I know the sight of everybody here must be a dagger in your mean, false heart! What! do you know me as I am, at last?’



Mr. Pecksniff had cause to stare at him, for the triumph in his face, and speech, and figure was a sight to stare at.

“‘Look there!’ said the old man, pointing at him, and appealing to the rest. ‘Look there! And then—come hither, my dear Martin—look here! here! here!’ At every repetition of the word he pressed his grandson closer to his breast. . . . ‘Mary, my love, come here.’

“And she trembled and was very pale: he sat her on his own chair, and stood beside it with her hand in his; and Martin standing by him.

“‘The curse of our house,’ said the old man, looking kindly down upon her, ‘has been the love of self; has ever been the love of self. How often have I said so, when I never knew that I had wrought it upon others!’

“He drew one hand through Martin’s arm, and standing so, between them, proceeded thus:

“‘You all know how I bred this orphan up, to tend me. None of you can know by what degrees I have come to regard her as a daughter; for she has won upon me, by her self forgetfulness, her tenderness, her patience, all the goodness of her nature, when Heaven is her witness that I took but little pains to draw it forth. . . .

“‘There is a kind of selfishness,’ said Martin. ‘I have learned it in my own experience of my own breast—which is constantly upon the watch for selfishness in others; and holding others at a distance by suspicions and distrusts, wonders why they don’t approach, and don’t confide, and calls that selfishness in them. . . .

“‘Listen, hypocrite! Listen, smooth-tongued, servile, crawling knave!’ said Martin. ‘Listen, you shallow dog! What! When I was seeking him, you had already spread your nets; you were already fishing for him, were ye? When I lay ill in this good woman’s house, and your meek spirit pleaded for my grandson, you had already caught him, had ye? Counting on the restoration of the love you knew I bore him, you designed him for one of your two daughters, did ye? Or failing that, you traded in him as a speculation which at any rate should blind me with the lustre of your charity, and found a claim upon me!’”

Then the old man proceeds to tell how he had placed himself in the hands of Pecksniff, and of all that man’s baseness, and how the wretch had seconded all his designs against his family, while all the time his supposed dupe was working out his own plans. Also how he had wished that love should spring up between young Martin and Mary, and how he rejoiced that it did, and how Martin told him that he loved Mary; and then he felt that the grace of the favour he intended was lost, and he reproached the young man for not confiding in him, and high words sprang up between them, and they separated in wrath. He told, too, how when he thought he was dying he had made the young man his heir, and how he had resolved to probe Pecksniff, and placed himself under his guidance; and he told of that worthy’s addresses to Mary, and all his villany, and lying, and selfishness, and hypocrisy.

"Feeling, rather than seeing, that the old man now pointed to the door, he [Pecksniff] raised his eyes, picked up his hat, and thus addressed him :

" 'Mr. Chuzzlewit, sir ! you have partaken of my hospitality.'

" 'And paid for it,' he observed.

" 'Thank you. That savours,' said Mr. Pecksniff, taking out his pocket-handkerchief, 'of your old familiar frankness. You have paid for it. I was about to make the remark. You have deceived me, sir. Thank you again. I am glad of it. To see you in the possession of your health and faculties on any terms, is, in itself, a sufficient recompense. To have been deceived, implies a trusting nature. Mine is a trusting nature. I am thankful for it. I would rather have a trusting nature, do you know, sir, than a doubting one. . . .

" 'There is hardly any person present, Mr. Chuzzlewit,' said Pecksniff, 'by whom I have *not* been deceived. I have forgiven those persons on the spot. That was my duty ; and, of course, I have done it. Whether it was worthy of you to partake of my hospitality, and to act the part you did act in my house, that, sir, is a question which I leave to your own conscience. And your conscience does not acquit you. No, sir, no ! . . .

" 'I have been struck this day,' said Mr. Pecksniff, 'with a walking-stick (which I have every reason to believe has knobs upon it), on that delicate and exquisite portion of the human anatomy, the brain. Several blows have been inflicted, sir, without a walking-stick, upon that tenderer portion of my frame, my heart. You have mentioned, sir, my being bankrupt in my purse. Yes, sir, I am. By an unfortunate speculation, combined with treachery, I find myself reduced to poverty ; at a time, sir, when the child of my bosom is widowed, and affliction and disgrace are in my family. . . .

" 'I know the human mind, although I trust it. . . . Do I not know that, in the silence and the solitude of night, a little voice will whisper in your ear, Mr. Chuzzlewit, 'This was not well. This was not well, sir !' Think of this, sir (if you will have the goodness), remote from the impulses of passion, and apart from the specialities, if I may use that strong remark, of prejudice. And if you ever contemplate the silent tomb, sir, which you will excuse me for entertaining some doubt of your doing, after the conduct into which you have allowed yourself to be betrayed this day ; if you ever contemplate the silent tomb, sir, think of me. If you find yourself approaching to the silent tomb, sir, think of me. If you should wish to have anything inscribed upon your silent tomb, sir, let it be, that I—ah, my remorseful sir ! that I—the humble individual who has now the honour of reproaching you, forgave you. That I forgave you when my injuries were fresh, and when my bosom was newly wrung. It may be bitterness to you to hear it now, sir, but you will live to seek a consolation in it. May you find a consolation in it when you want it, sir ! Good morning !'

"With this sublime address Mr. Pecksniff departed."

Let us leave this fine moral lesson to the reader's own reflections. We would not weaken its power by a single comment.



"DORA."

IN the philosophy of a deep reflective nature our Laureate is pre-eminent. Whether he deals with the romantic and the chivalrous, the heroic and lordly men, the fair and stately women of olden times, as in the grand legends which he has polished and beautified in "The Idylls of the King," or, yet again, in the humbler walks of lowly life—"the short and simple annals of the poor"—as in "Dora" and in "Enoch Arden," we find the didactic element ever prevalent, the emotional predominating over the dramatic, the inner feeling over the outward action. Indeed, in the greatest of all his poems, "In Memoriam," the external life almost disappears, and gives place to the profoundest musing of the moralist upon man, his spiritual nature, his relation to God's providence, his training through sorrow and suffering from rebellious grief to adoring submission. Diction always the most suitable, whether it glows, as in "The Princess," with the richest colouring and the brightest fancies, or stern in its sublime and nervous simplicity, as occasionally in "The Idylls of the King"—melody wrought to perfection—and a style pure and polished as the marble, even when it has the marble's hardness and coldness—establish Tennyson's claim to the highest place amongst the poets of our day.

Many of the shorter pieces of Tennyson would have made his fame as a poet, had he died comparatively young,—had he never lived to give the world the larger and grander compositions upon which his immortality will rest immutable and secure. “The May Queen,” one of the most pathetic ballads in our language, is on the lip or in the heart of every one. Then, too, we have idylls of rural life as picturesque, as tender, as softly musical, as those of the famed Sicilian triad—who culled the fairest flowers of Greek poesy—breathing all the melody and passion of Theocritus, as in “The Miller’s Daughter,” and “The Talking Oak;,” rich with the freshness of the pastoral landscape, fragrant with the breath of flowers, bright with the hues of garden and greensward and woodland, as in “The Gardener’s Daughter.” One other there is, so severely simple in its composition that one almost thinks it is prosaic; but fine, nervous Saxon prose, such as makes our English Bible unapproachably beautiful—a narrative of heroism and self-denial in a humble rustic maiden, told in language calmly measured, as the beautiful story of Ruth is told; yet the very tranquillity of its flow shows the depth of the feeling beneath, that comes not up bubbling to the surface in passionate words, yet makes the heart beat with emotion, and the eye grow dim with tears. Such is the tale of “Dora.” The poem is so condensed in narration, so much of the sentiment is suggested oftentimes by a few brief words, and so little is to be found that is not necessary to the progress of the tale, that it is difficult to abbreviate it—impossible to give it in apter language, even in the form of prose. The tale is one of humble rural life; the incidents are few; the actors only four—indeed, we may say but three. Farmer Allan has a son William, and a niece Dora—the child of a brother who parted from him in anger, and died in foreign lands. Allan reared the girl, and she was fair to look on, and thrifty; and the old man, as he looked at them, would say to himself, “I’ll make them man and wife.” Dora’s heart yearned towards William, but he thought not of her. Then upon a day Allan called William and said to him—

“ ‘ My son :

I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die :
And I have set my heart upon a match.’ ”

Then he told him how he had reared Dora, and had longed for years to see them married. But William said—



"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora."

Angry that his will should be gainsaid, the father gives his son a month to think over the matter, with the threat that if he disobeys he shall never more darken his doors. This makes the young man dislike Dora, and behave harshly to her. But she bears all meekly. William leaves his father's house, and "half in love, half spite," marries Mary Morrison. The old man forbids Dora to speak to William or his wife on pain of dismissal, and Dora promises, being weak. William dies heart-broken and poor, though Dora aided him by stealth, and leaves a boy. Then Dora comes to Mary and says—

"You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

"And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not ; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

"But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat,
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said, 'Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answered softly, 'This is William's child !'
'And did I not?' said Allan, 'did I not
Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again,
'Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !'"

Allan speaks harshly to Dora, and says it is a trick between the women. Nevertheless, he takes the child; and Dora, when she hears the child's cry, bows down her head and weeps. Then she returns to Mary, and tells her that her uncle has taken her boy, and that she will live and work with Mary. But Mary says that this shall never be; that she will go and have back her boy, and beg of Allan to take Dora again; and if he will not, then that they will live together and work for William's boy.

The women kissed each other, and set out for the farm: and they peeped into the chamber and saw

"The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire."

Then they entered, and the boy saw his mother, and cried to come to her. Mary said—

"O father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O sir! when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus;
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
But now, sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before."

"So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:

"I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son."

May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.'

"Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse ;
And all his love came back a hundredfold ;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
Thinking of William.

"So those four abode
Within one house together ; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death."

As Griselda is the type of patience and submission, and Una of purity and truth, so may we adopt Dora as a beautiful illustration of meekness and of charity—self-denying and self-sacrificing—contrasting finely with every character in the tale by the possession of somewhat in which each fails—with the stern, self-willed father, with the ungentle and rude cousin, and even with Mary, who took from her her first love, and for whom she gave up all ; while Dora is true to the end to the memory of him who knew not her worth, and slighted her affection. As we peruse this simple and tender story, we gain from it somewhat more than the momentary pleasure derived from its poetic charm—we learn a lesson, how beautiful beyond all adornment in woman is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," that compassionate and courteous love that renders not "evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing." An old Greek writer has a fine thought, which we venture to translate, and apply to this little poem :—"As the bee collects the juice of the honey from the flowers which charm others only by their hues and their odours, so the philosophic student will draw from the poets what is conducive to a good life, while others feel only delight from their songs."

THE END.





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